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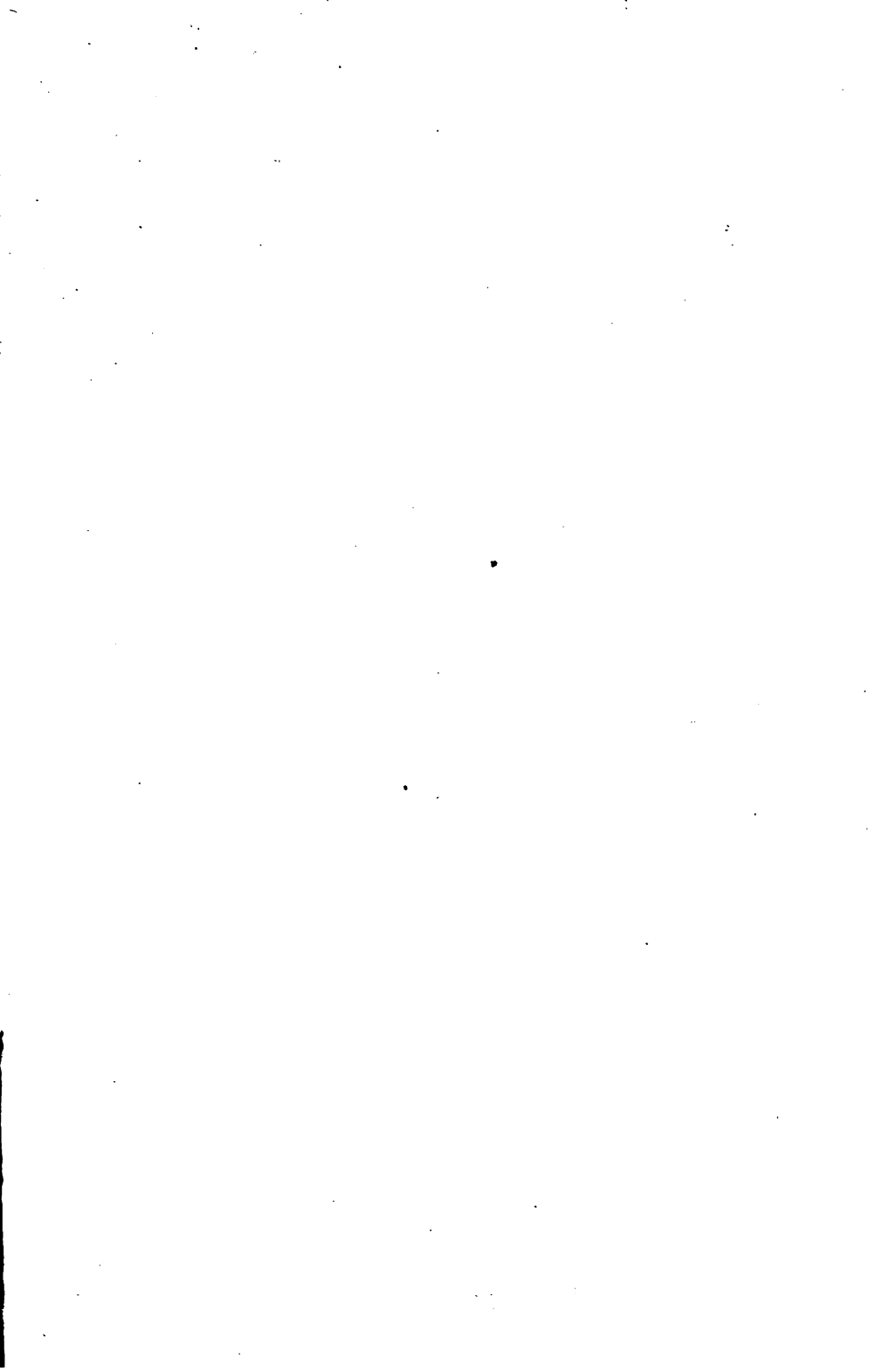


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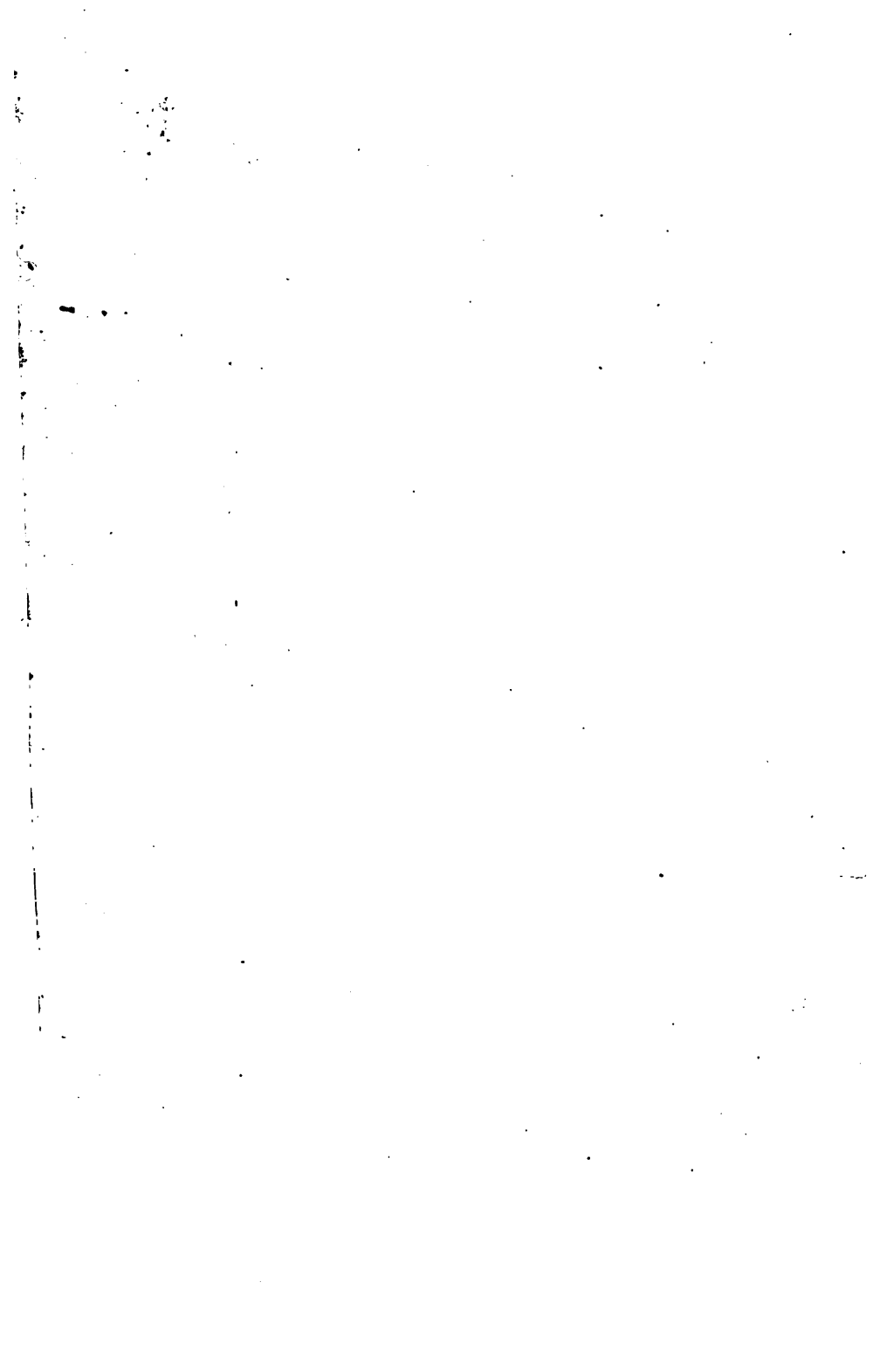
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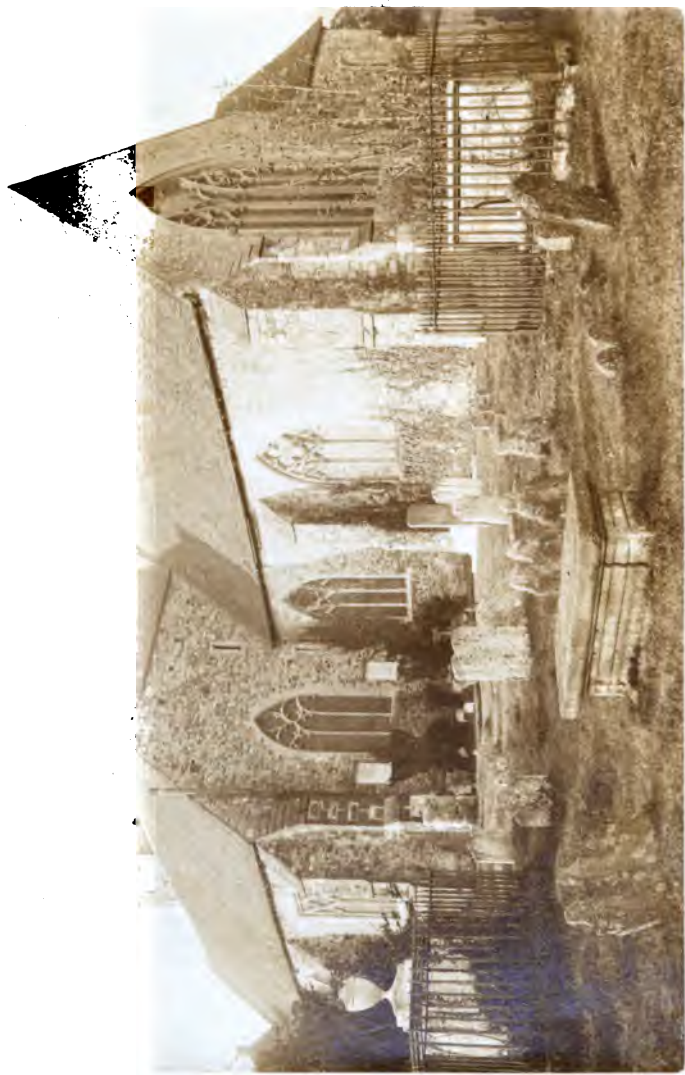
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WROTHAM CHURCH.

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A GLANCE
AT THE
HUNDRED OF WROTHAM,
INCLUDING THE PARISHES OF
WROTHAM, IGHTHAM, SHIPBOURNE, AND STANSTED,
IN THE DAYS OF
THE EARLY EDWARDS.

EDITED BY THE
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*Gift of
William Endicott, Jr.*

PREFACE.

The following particulars illustrating the history of the Hundred of Wrotham, in the days of the early Edwards, have been collected almost exclusively from two Assize Rolls relating to the county of Kent, preserved with many others in the Public Record Office, London.

It is hoped they will prove acceptable not only to persons living in the district where the events recorded took place, now nearly six hundred years ago, but to others who have a taste for studying the mediæval history of the country, and are interested in hearing about the circumstances under which our remote ancestors passed their lives, and of some of the dangers to which they were exposed.

The Assize Rolls are, from their very character, simply records of Accidents and Offences. It will not therefore excite surprise if this "Glance at the Hundred of Wrotham" should seem to have been taken under unfavourable circumstances. The calendar of crimes is certainly heavy enough, but it must be borne in mind that it represents an accumulation of some fourteen years; for Pleas of the Crown were held only when the Justices Itinerant went on their circuits, every seven years. It must also be remembered that the age was one in which the rights affecting life and property were most imperfectly observed. When this is taken into consideration there is room for satisfaction that the catalogue of offences is not larger; and especially in noticing that the state of society in the Hundred of Wrotham compares very favourably with that in other Hundreds throughout the county of Kent—a conclusion justified by an inspection of the remaining portion of the Rolls.

The spelling of all place-names and persons has been strictly preserved. At the end of the two Assize Rolls is added a Subsidy Roll, containing a list of families resident in the Hundred—which then included the four parishes of Wrotham, Ightham, Shipbourne, and Stansted—who were called on to contribute to the Grant made in the first year of King Edward III., 1327, rather more than a dozen years after the events recorded in the later Assize Roll. The amount paid by each person is given, so that a fair estimate may be formed of the position everyone occupied among his neighbours.

The original records are written in the usual abbreviated mediæval Latin, which in many places is extremely hard to decipher; the reader will therefore not regret their translation into English, which has been given as literally as possible. In illustrating and explaining obsolete customs and old legal forms, "Reeves' History of the English Law" has been found useful; and the editor gratefully acknowledges much kind assistance from Walford D. Selby, Esq., of the Public Record Office, who is always both willing and able to help a searcher when in difficulty. His thanks are also due for several hints from James Greenstreet, Esq., to whom all Kentish surnames, however quaintly rendered in ancient documents, seem to be as household words.

It only remains to state that if any profits should be realized by this little attempt to throw light upon a dark period of county history, they will be handed over to the Fund for the Organ Restoration in connection with the fine old church of Wrotham—a church which once admitted within its precincts felons flying from the pursuit of justice, but now stands daily open to welcome within its courts all those who are "prisoners of hope."

A GLANCE

AT THE

HUNDRED OF WROTHAM.

PLEAS OF THE CROWN OF THE COUNTY OF KENT,
21 EDWARD I., A.D. 1293.*

“Calendar of the County of Kent, before J. de Berewyk’ and his associates, Justices Itinerant in the same County, in the twenty-first year of the reign of King Edward, the son of King Henry.”

“Lathe of Aylesford. Hundred of Wrotham.”
“The same John [Oliuer], chief bailiff . . . sworn.”

“Walter de la Hale . . . sworn.	Ralph Wolward . . , sworn.
John de Bersted’ . . . sworn.	William de Rokesle . sworn.
Henry Pistore de Stansted’ sworn.	Peter de Croulond . sworn.
William de Stansted’ , sworn.	Robert de Shypburn’ . sworn.
Robert le Kyng’ . . . sworn.	Gilbert de Wynfeld’ . sworn.
Richard de Sykeleshede sworn.	Henry Ffareman . . sworn.”

THE first two membranes of the Roll are taken up with recording the names of the jurymen who represented the different hundreds, half-hundreds, villatæ, and cities throughout the county. The list amounts to the large number of about eight hundred and thirty, which seems quite out of proportion to the number of

* Official reference .—“Placita Coronæ, 21 Edward I., Kent, M/2/32/2,” m m. i. 1 d. 30, 30 d.

cases to be tried. But it must be remembered that at this period jurors were not the same as they are at the present day; they were *witnesses* rather than *hearers of evidence*, and were selected for the knowledge they already possessed of the cases in which they were called on to give their verdict. We do not meet with jurors as *triers of evidence* much before the early years of the fifteenth century. In illustration of this statement the following remarks of Sir Francis Palgrave will be read with interest:—"Trial by jury, according to the old English law, was a proceeding essentially different from the modern tribunal, still bearing the same name, by which it has been replaced; and whatever merits belonged to the original mode of judicial investigation—and they were great and unquestionable, though accompanied by many imperfections—such benefits are not to be exactly identified with the advantages now resulting from the great bulwark of English liberty. Jurymen in the present day are triers of the issue: they are individuals who found their opinion upon the evidence, whether oral or written, adduced before them; and the verdict delivered by them is their declaration of the judgment which they have formed. But the ancient jurymen were not impanelled to examine into the credibility of the evidence: the question was not discussed and argued before them: they, the jurymen, were the witnesses themselves, and the verdict was substantially the examination of these witnesses, who of their own knowledge, and without the aid of other testimony, afforded their evidence respecting the facts in question to the best of their belief. In its primitive form a trial by jury was therefore only a trial by witnesses,

and jurymen were distinguished from any other witnesses only by customs which imposed upon them the obligation of an oath and regulated their number, and which prescribed their rank and defined the territorial qualifications from whence they obtained their degree and influence in society."

In connection with the very large number of jurymen named in these Rolls, one cannot help feeling that if they all journeyed to Canterbury, or wherever the Crown Pleas might be held, on the occasions when the Justices Itinerant made their circuits, there must have been no little stir throughout the county; and the septennial visits of these judges might well have served as an era from which to date events, like the Olympic Games among the Greeks of old.

The twelve Wrotham jurors reveal the place of their residence to some extent by their surnames; thus, two came from Stansted, one of them being evidently the *baker* of the community; one from Shipbourne, one from Hale borough, and one from Winfield borough. John de Bersted', William de Rokesle, and Peter de Croulond may have settled in the Hundred, and retained the name of the places from which they originally came for the sake of identification. Robert le Kyng' no doubt gained his name from having been elected king in some of the rural games or pageantries of the period, and retained the *sobriquet* ever after; but neither he nor Ralph Wolward give any hint as to their exact locality. Ffarman was already, even at this early date, an old Wrotham name, since we find in Domesday Book, compiled in 1086, that—"Of the same manor Farman holds, of the Archbishop, one yoke and a half: and

he has there three carucates, and six villeins with twelve cottars having two carucates." Perhaps one may venture to conclude that this was a *personal* name, bestowed on account of his fair appearance, and that it indicated a connection with the Anglo-Saxon race, as did the long flaxen hair of the three lads who, centuries earlier, had attracted the notice of Gregory the Great in the market-place at Rome, where they were exposed for sale ; if so, we find in Wrotham an instance, not of very frequent occurrence, of one of the conquered race in the position of a landholder when the Survey was compiled, twenty years after the fate of the country had been decided on the sanguinary field of Hastings. But this by the way. It is evident that the Wrotham jurors were scattered about over the Hundred, which is quite in keeping with the fact that the cases for trial came in from every township, and from every borough or tithing. John Oliver was chief bailiff of the greater part of the lathe of Aylesford, and his name appears at the head of the lists of jurymen for about twelve hundreds. Against the names of Peter de Croulond and Robert de Shypburn' the word *electores* is written in the original. With respect to the election of the jurors, it appears to have been the duty of the Justices Itinerant to cause four knights to be chosen out of the whole county, who, upon their oaths, were to elect two lawful knights of every hundred ; and these two were to choose, upon their oaths, ten knights in every hundred ; and if there were not knights enough, then free and lawful men. These twelve together were to answer to all the articles of inquiry which concerned their particular hundred.

After the names of the jurors in the different hundreds, a fuller list is given of the Justices Itinerant before whom the proceedings were taken, and then follows a list of the sheriffs and coroners who had held office since the preceding *iter*. All these would have to answer, either in person or by their representatives, for sums of money they had received by way of amercement or forfeiture, which formed a part of the royal revenue. It does not appear that any of the persons named had a very close connection with the Hundred of Wrotham, except Nicholas Kyryel, one of the coroners, who held the manor of Ightham.

The Justices Itinerant, who had become an institution in the reign of Henry I., and are occasionally to be met with as early as the reign of the Conqueror, were sent into the different counties chiefly to hear Pleas of the Crown, that is to say, all suits in the king's name for offences committed against his crown and dignity, and likewise against the peace; they had commission also to hear pleas in real actions up to a certain value or amount. The circuits, or *itinera*, which were appointed at the council of Northampton, in the year 1176, were six in number, into each of which three Justices were sent once in every seven years to administer justice. But a few years later an alteration was made in this arrangement, and the kingdom was parcelled out into four circuits only, to which, as being of greater extent, the larger number of five Justices was assigned, except in one circuit, where the number was increased to six. In the circuit which contained Kent nine other counties were included. The arrangement as to the number of the Justices Itinerant seems to have been maintained at

the period of which we are treating, *five* names being mentioned in the list.

"Pleas of the Crown held before John de Berewyk', Thomas de Normanuill', William de Bereford, John de Lythegreynes, and Hugh de Kent, Justices Itinerant, at Canterbury, in the county of Kent, in the Quinzaine of Easter, in the twenty-first year of the reign of king Edward, son of king Henry."

"These have been sheriffs since the last *iter* here, viz., Robert de Schotho, and Hamo de Gatton', who are deceased, Peter de Huntingfeld', William de Chelefeld', William de Bremleshete, John de Northwode, and Richard de Cumbe, who is now [sheriff]."

"These have been coroners since the last *iter* here: Allan de Helles, John Ffaykyn, Henry de Woghope, John de Bourn', Thomas de Marynes, Dionisius de Ildhallegate, Ralph de Pyuynton', Richard de Eslynden', Robert de Kyngesnode, Roger de Mosewell', John de Merelay, Henry de Appeldorefeld', William Herlysoun, Robert de Hugham, John Elys, who come and answer for their time; William de Cottestede, deceased, for whom William de Cottestede, his heir, answers; William de Detlyng', deceased, for whom William de Detlyng', his heir, answers; and Nicholas Kyryel, deceased, whose daughters and heirs, Matilda and Gunnora, are under age."

"The whole county bears record that Englecherie is presented in this county in cases of felony only, and that for men, and by two on the part of the father or mother."

The word *Englecherie* occurs continually in the early Assize Rolls. It meant that a person was born

of English parents. Historians tell us that when Canute became king of England, he sent back part of his army to Denmark at the request of the nobility, but retained some as a body guard. With a view to their protection, he made a law that if an Englishman killed a Dane he should be tried for the murder; or if he escaped, and therefore could not be brought to trial, the town or hundred in which the offence was committed, which was responsible under any circumstances, should be more heavily amerced. After this law it was therefore necessary, in order to avoid the *heavier* amercement, to prove that the person slain was an Englishman; and this proof was termed *Englecherie*. The law thus made by Canute was retained by the Conqueror for protection of the life of his Norman subjects, and continued in force until the reign of Edward III., though long before that time it must have become a dead letter, owing to the gradual fusion by intermarriage of the conquering and conquered races. In the present Roll there is evidence that it was already falling into disuse.

"THE HUNDRED OF WROTHAM COMES BY
XIJ JURORS."

"Walter Achard and Thomas his son, and Thomas le Coupere, fought together in the borough of La Hale: so that the aforesaid Walter and Thomas his son killed Thomas le Coupere. And the aforesaid Walter Achard was at once arrested, and led off to the prison of the Archbishop of Canterbury at Meydestane; and there he broke prison, and escaped from the same. Therefore to judgment for the escape

Hale.

Maidstone.

upon Nicholas de Knovile* and Simon de Greyle, the executors of the will of John, late Archbishop of Canterbury. His chattels are worth sixpence; for which the same executors shall answer. And the aforesaid Walter after he escaped put himself in the church of Wrotham, and acknowledged the deed, and abjured the realm in the presence of the coroner. And whereas this happened in the daytime, and the township of Wrotham did not take him, therefore it is in mercy. And the aforesaid Thomas, the son of Walter, immediately after the act took to flight, and is suspected. Therefore let him be demanded and outlawed. He had no chattels. But as both he and the aforesaid Walter were in the borough of La Hale Shipbourne, in Shibburn', therefore it is in mercy. And the aforesaid Thomas le Coupere was buried, without view of the coroner, by John Budde and the township of Shibburn'; therefore in mercy. No Englecherie presented. Judgment: *murdrum* on the hundred, And the borough of — " (*sic*).

Hale, or La Hale, gave a name to one of the boroughs in the parish of Wrotham, though it is here stated to have been in Shipbourne. In the map of the Hundred of Wrotham in Hasted's History of Kent, Hale-borough is placed a short distance from Plaxtol, on the road leading to Borough Green. The name is scarcely ever heard now, though to the older inhabitants of the district it is not unfamiliar. The remaining boroughs were Wrotham town, Stansted, Nepicar, Winfield, and Roughway—the last a very suggestive name—which occur frequently in these Rolls.

* He was made Rector of Maidstone in the year 1287, and died in the year 1310. *Vide* Winchelsey's Register, 47b.

The Archbishop alluded to was John Peckham, who died at Mortlake in the year 1292. His executors are held responsible for the fine to which a lord was liable for the escape of a felon from his gaol. In the present instance the prisoner, after his escape, took refuge in Wrotham church, and abjured the realm. This was a course very usually adopted by felons; and instances of it are frequently mentioned. Taking *Sanctuary*, as it was called, was a right expressly sanctioned in the laws of Alfred, Ethelred, and all the subsequent Anglo-Saxon kings. The following account of it is given by Blackstone:—"If a person accused of any crime, except treason and sacrilege, had fled to any church or churchyard, and within forty days after, went in sack-cloth and confessed himself guilty before the coroner, and declared all the particular circumstances of the offence, and took the oath in that case provided, viz., that he abjured the realm, and would depart from thence forthwith at the port which should be assigned him, and would never return without leave from the king, he, by this means saved his life, if he observed the conditions of the oath, by going with a cross in his hand, and with all convenient speed, to the port assigned, and embarking. For if during this forty days' privilege of sanctuary, or on his road to the sea-side, he was apprehended and arraigned in any court for this felony, he might plead the privilege of sanctuary, and had a right to be remanded if taken out against his will."* By this abjuration his blood was attainted, and he forfeited all his goods and chattels.

The expression *in mercy* signified that a person had

* Vol. iv. p. 332.

committed an offence, for which he stood at the mercy of the king or lord, who ordinarily imposed a pecuniary fine. All such fines and amercements formed part of the revenues of those who were owners of the hundred, or town, or manor. The term *murdrum* was applied both to the offence, and to the mulct, or penalty, imposed for its commission.

“From the same sheriff as a deodand for a certain cart, out of which Roger, the son of William Chon, fell, and died therefrom, seven shillings.”

A *deodand* was the value of any personal chattel which caused the death of a human being. Thus, as in the present instance, if a person fell from a cart and was killed, the cart was considered to have caused his death, and its value was forfeited; similarly if anyone fell out of a boat and was drowned, the worth of the boat would be required as the deodand. It was originally designed as an expiation for the souls of such as were suddenly snatched away by death without time for preparation; and with this view was handed over to the church for pious uses. By degrees deodands came to be farmed out, like other forfeitures, by lords of manors, and their original use ceased to be observed.

Nepicar. “Ralph Manton, Walter and John, his brothers, and John le Hunte were together in the borough of Nepacre, and a dispute having arisen between them, the aforesaid Ralph, Walter, and John Manton beat the aforesaid John le Hunte, and ill-treated him, so that a certain Christiana, the daughter of Constantine, who was holding her little boy William, ten weeks

old, wished to help the said John le Hunte ; and when the aforesaid John Manton tried to strike the aforesaid Christiana, he struck the said William, Christiana's son, with a certain knife on the head, from which he died. And the aforesaid John Manton, Ralph, and John,* his brothers, immediately took to flight, and are now remaining in the country. Therefore let them be taken. And it was ascertained by the coroner's rolls that the aforesaid John Manton was afterwards taken, and imprisoned at Hallynge, in the Bishop of Rochester's prison. Therefore let inquiry be made how he got out. The first finder and four neighbours come, and are not suspected. Afterwards the jurors testify that the aforesaid John Manton was taken to Maydestan, and was there acquitted of the aforesaid death, in the presence of the justices appointed for the gaol delivery. But as there is a doubt whether he was legally acquitted, therefore let him be taken. Afterwards the sheriff testifies that the aforesaid John Manton is not to be found, but has withdrawn. And the jurors suspect him of the aforesaid death. Therefore let him be demanded and outlawed. He had no chattels, nor was he in a pledge, because he was a stranger. And the jurors in no way suspect the aforesaid Ralph, Walter, or John le Hunte of the aforesaid death. Therefore let them return if they will. But because they withdrew themselves on account of the aforesaid death, let their chattels be confiscated for the flight. They had no chattels."

Halling.

Maidstone.

Nepacre. This early rendering of a place-name, which is to be met with in almost every variety of

* A mistake for 'Walter.'

spelling, and which in the present day is usually written Nepicar, is suggestive of a reasonable derivation. The latter portion of the word is clear enough, and it is a well established fact that in early times *acre* was not applied to a strictly defined piece of land, but denoted the *ager*, or open plot of ground, which was put under cultivation. The first syllable may well come from the Anglo-Saxon word *nep* meaning *low*, whence our term *neap* tides. If this derivation be correct, the name would signify a low-lying district under cultivation, which is quite in accordance with its actual character. A familiar illustration of *acre* in composition, when not meaning a fixed measure of land, is to be found in such names as Longacre, Goodacre, Whittaker; and in Acreman, or Akerman, which denoted simply a husbandman.

Ridley. "From the same sheriff as a deodand for a certain cart, out of which William Ffranceys, of Redlegh' fell, and died, four shillings. And the twelve jurors falsely appraised the said deodand; therefore in mercy."

Wrotham Heath. "A certain stranger was found slain on Wrotham Heath.* It is not known who killed him. The first finder and four neighbours come, and are not suspected. No Englecherie presented. Judgment: *murdrum* on the hundred. And the borough of—"(sic).

Roughway. "John atte Hasele and Sibilla his wife came together into the borough of Rogheye, and the aforesaid John suddenly struck the aforesaid Sibilla on the head with a certain *vogia* from which she immediately died. And the aforesaid John was at once arrested,

* In the original Roll—in *bruera de W'roth'm*.

and taken to the prison of Meydestane, and was Maidstone.
hung there for the same death, in the presence of the justices appointed for the gaol delivery. His chattels are worth three shillings, for which the sheriff shall answer. The first finder and four neighbours come, and are not suspected. Afterwards it was ascertained by the coroner's rolls that a certain Matilda, mother of the aforesaid John, and Julia his sister, were indicted elsewhere for assenting to the aforesaid felony, and were apprehended for the same and taken to the prison of Meydestan, and there in the presence of J. de Meriley and his associates, justices appointed for the gaol delivery, were acquitted by the country, according as it appears by the rolls of the same justices."

The Justices of Gaol delivery differed from the Justices Itinerant in being sent to particular places, with commission from the sovereign to try causes, and deliver the gaol of such prisoners as were either condemned to capital punishment, or acquitted of the charge brought against them. Moreover they were sent much more frequently—in later times at least twice a year; whereas the Justices Itinerant went on their circuits only once in seven years. The exact nature of the instrument with which John atte Hasele—*i.e.* John at the hazel-bush, or wood,—killed his wife remains a mystery.

"From the same sheriff as a deodand for a certain pig which bit Emma the daughter of Ralph Cok', and from which she died, ten pence. And Roger de Mosewell, the coroner, and the borough of Stanstede falsely Stansted.
appraised the said deodand. Therefore in mercy."

Hale. "Andrew le Hunte slew John le Bovde, in the borough of La Hale, and at once took to flight, and is suspected. Therefore let him be demanded and outlawed. He had no chattels, but he was in the Shipbourne. pledge of John le Bud in Shipburn'. Therefore in mercy. The first finder and four neighbours come, and are not suspected. No Englecherie presented. Judgment; *murdrum* on the hundred. And the borough which first—"(*sic.*)

The name John le Bovde might perhaps better be rendered John le Bonde; or it may have been a nickname from fancied resemblance to a *bud*, or calf. The name of Bud, or Budde, is mentioned more than once in connection with Shipbourne; and there is still a district in the parish called Budd's Green. John le Bud was the head man of the borough, or tithing, in which Andrew le Hunte was enrolled, and he would be responsible for the amercement exacted for the commission of the offence.

Wrotham. "The jurors make presentment that a certain John de Benstede was taken for larceny, and imprisoned at Wrotham, in the prison of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which prison he broke and escaped from. Therefore to judgment for the escape on Nicholas de Knouill' and Simon de Greylle, the executors of John, late Archbishop of Canterbury. And the aforesaid John, after he escaped, put himself in the church of Wrotham, and there acknowledged that he was a thief of many thefts, and in the presence of the coroner abjured the realm. He had no chattels. But he was in the pledge of Augustine de'la Herbelande in La Hale: therefore in mercy."

Hale.

"The jurors make presentment that Richard le Mares' was taken for larceny, and led off to prison at Canterbury, by Robert le Long Taylur, then of the borough of Wrotham. And that Richard when he was being led into the city of Canterbury, escaped from the custody of that borough. Therefore to judgment for the escape on the aforesaid borough. And the aforesaid Richard immediately after he escaped, put himself in the church of the blessed Mary by the Castle of Canterbury, and acknowledged himself to be a thief of many thefts, and there, in presence of the coroner, abjured the realm. His chattels are worth sixteen shillings, for which the sheriff shall answer."

Wrotham.
Canterbury.

"Nigel le Walewere through fear of arrest put himself in the church of Wrotham, and there acknowledged himself to be a thief of many thefts; and there in presence of the coroner abjured the realm. His chattels are worth six shillings and eight pence, for which the sheriff shall answer."

Wrotham.

"Concerning defaults, they say that Martin de Pecham did not come on the first day. Therefore in mercy."

"Concerning liberties, they say that the Archbishop of Canterbury pleads pleas of unlawful distress, and has gallows, and amends for breach of the assize of bread and ale in Wrotham. And whereas the Archbishop is now dead, therefore let the aforesaid liberties remain until &c."

Wrotham.

In former times a gallows was as much an institution of the *hundred* as stocks were of a *parish*. In some instances, where there were distinct franchises, more than one gallows existed in the same hundred.

But both gallows and stocks have now become things of the past ; and probably in almost every hundred the position which the unsightly instrument of death once occupied is a matter of speculation. In the case of the gallows mentioned in the preceding extract, however, the precise locality can be ascertained almost without a doubt. Persons who are acquainted with the main road leading from Sevenoaks to Maidstone, will have noticed in front of them after passing Borough Green, a windmill occupying a very elevated position on a spur of the high ground which here overlooks the Sevenoaks and Maidstone branch of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway. The view from the top of the hill is particularly striking : it extends from beyond the Knockholt Beeches on the W., to far down the valley towards Ashford, on the E., and in another direction almost includes Rochester. This hill, in the map of the Hundred of Wrotham which is given in Hasted's History of Kent, published about a hundred years ago, is called Gally Hill ; and it is stated by a very old inhabitant of St. Mary's Platt, in which district it stands, that in his young days it always went by the name of *Gallows* Hill. This by itself would be sufficient to indicate the purpose it once served. But the same authority also says that when he was a boy he often heard his father remark that at the time the windmill was built, about the end of the last century, the workmen who were digging the foundations came across several human remains, which were then believed to be those of felons who had been hung there. If publicity was the object aimed at, it is hardly possible to conceive any position better calculated to ensure it than this

conspicuous hill on which the windmill stands. There is little doubt therefore, that on this spot, many of those who are mentioned in the present Rolls paid the extreme penalty of the law, among the number being probably Robert Ffraunceys, who is mentioned in the next extract.

“From Nicholas de Knouill’ and Simon de Greylle, executors of the will of John, late Archbishop of Canterbury, for the chattels of Robert Ffraunceys, who was hung, five shillings.”

“Concerning indicted persons, they say that Roger called Bygge, of Shypbourne, of the borough of La Shipbourne.
Hale, and John the son of John the presbyter of Hale.
Shypburne, withdrew themselves for a burglary at the grange of the rector of the church of Shipburn’, and for two bushels of corn which were carried off.
Roger Ffrapehaste for a burglary at the house of John le Bonde, and for two overcoats and one coat belonging to the same John, which were carried off.
And William, called atte More, of the borough of Eytham, for a certain cow stolen from Simon, clerk of Sypburn’. Ightham
And all withdrew themselves, and are suspected ; therefore let them be demanded and outlawed. The chattels of the aforesaid William atte More are worth eighteen pence, for which the Sheriff shall answer. And he was in the pledge of Geoffrey the son of Alice, in Eytheham ; therefore in mercy. The others had no chattels. And the aforesaid Roger Bygge, and John, the son of the presbyter, were in the pledge of Richard Chubbel in Shipbourne ; therefore in mercy. And Roger Ffrapehaste was in the pledge of Hugh Tryntrey, in Wynfeld ; therefore Winfield.

in mercy. And the aforesaid Roger Ffrapheaste had chattels, viz. five shillings, for which J. de Burne, the sheriff, shall answer."

In this account of robberies committed at Shipbourne mention is made of a *rector*, a *presbyter* and a *clerk*; the presbyter's son being guilty of stealing the rector's corn. It is interesting as revealing the fact that a church was in existence there with a staff of clergy at the time in question, 1286—93. It seems probable that Shipbourne was given with Tonbridge to the order of the Knights Hospitallers, by Roger de Clare, in the reign of Henry II., and if this was so, the rector alluded to may have been the Prior of the Order, and the presbyter the resident vicar in charge of the parish. Previous to the thirteenth century churches appropriated to monastic and other collegiate foundations, were served either by itinerant priests or by vicars appointed by the religious bodies themselves, who might be removed any time at their pleasure. This was found to be so great an abuse, resulting as it often did in the total neglect of the spiritual needs of the parish, that, about the year 1215, the establishment of *perpetual* vicarages was decreed, as well in churches appropriated to religious institutions, as in those held by rectors, who from possessing other preferment, were unable to be resident. These perpetual vicars were to be appointed by the bishop, and were to have a suitable portion out of the income of the church, for their subsistence. This was probably the case at Shipbourne, the presbyter occupying the position of perpetual vicar. Simon the clerk was, no doubt, one of the inferior order of clergy; his exact office is not

indicated. During the recent demolition of the church built in 1722, by Christopher, Lord Barnard, several remains of early English architecture in the shape of fragments of shafts, mullions, and tracery, which had been built into the walls, were brought to light ; these no doubt formed part of the church which was standing when the events recorded here took place. The best of the fragments have been carefully selected and judiciously placed in the interior of the north wall of the vestry of the new church, where they serve to indicate the existence of a church at Shipbourne, some six centuries ago, of the same style of architecture as the fair building just completed. There is still a farm near the church which from time immemorial has been called "The Grange." The scribe of the period evidently disliked sameness ; he has contrived to spell *Shipbourne* in a different way each of the five times he had to write it ! One may regret that he had not occasion to make mention of Ightham more often. But both Rolls shew how very unsettled orthography was at this time.

"The jurors make presentment that Richard de Pimpe, the sub-escheator, after the death of Baldwin de Eldham, seized the manor of Aldham into the hand of the lord king, and held it in the seizin of the lord king, and caused to be taken in the park of the same [Baldwin] ten does and one buck ; they know not by what warrant. And Richard says that on the decease of the aforesaid Baldwin, two deer were killed in the same park, and that he took the aforesaid deer, so killed, by command of Malculm de Harle, the escheator. And [in token] that he took no others

Yaldham.

he prays that inquiry may be made. And the jurors elected for this purpose say upon their oath that the aforesaid Richard took nine does and one buck in the same park, as was before stated."

This extract refers to the manor of Aldham, Ealdham, or Yaldham, in the days when it was owned by one proprietor, and possessed a park well stocked with deer. Its name, as Hasted remarks in his History of Kent, is an indication of its antiquity, *eald* in Anglo-Saxon signifying *old*, and *ham* a *dwelling*. It consisted of three parts, of which East, or Great Yaldham, and West, or Little Yaldham, were in the parish of Wrotham, and the remainder, afterwards called Aldham St. Clere, was in Ightham. At the date of which we are speaking, it was owned by a family of the same name, one of whose ancestors, a certain Sir Thomas de Aldham, flourished in the reign of Richard I., and served under him in the Third Crusade. His descendant, Sir Thomas de Aldham possessed the estate in the time of Edward II., and dying without male issue, left his three daughters his heirs. One was married to a gentleman of the name of Newborough, in Dorsetshire; a second, Margery, became the wife of Martin Peckham, son of John Peckham of Hadlow; and the third, Isolda,* was married to John St. Clere. These marriages led to a division of the estate on the father's death. Martin Peckham became entitled, in right of his wife, to the part which was in Wrotham, viz. East and West Yaldham, the former of which he made his residence. And John St. Clere became, in a similar way, entitled to the part lying in Ightham, which, to distinguish it from the remainder, was termed Aldham

St. Clere, though it soon came to be called by the latter name only. Martin Peckham, who has already been mentioned in a previous extract, and his wife Margery, were buried, according to Weever, at Wrotham, their tombs being outside the porch, on the south side of the church. Their descendants continued to hold Yaldham in unbroken succession for some fourteen generations, or more, until about the year 1713, when Reginald Peckham, who was then owner, having no male heirs, alienated it, a year before he died, to another family; and subsequently it came into the possession of Mr. Evelyn, who was its owner in Hasted's time. The long connection of the Peckham family with Wrotham will quite account for the number of their monuments in the church.

The Ightham part of the estate continued in the family of the St. Cleres until the reign of Henry VII., when it was passed away to another family, and eventually came into the possession of Mr. Evelyn, who thus occupied much the same position as the original owner, Sir Thomas de Aldham.

"GAOL DELIVERY OF CANTERBURY CASTLE, IN
THE COUNTY OF KENT."

* * * * *

"Bartholomew atte Wyeche, apprehended for stealing a sheep in the fold of William Morys, and for other larcenies, comes, and being asked in what way he will acquit himself, defends the larceny, and the whole, and whatever is against the peace; and for good and evil puts himself on the country. And the jurors of that hundred, together with four of the Wrotham.

nearest boroughs, say on their oath that the aforesaid Bartholomew is in no way guilty of the aforesaid misdeeds imputed to him, nor of any others ; therefore he is acquitted thereof, &c." (m. 75.)

* * * * *

Wrotham. "Nicholas Seyntebarbe, apprehended for robbery committed against Martin de Pecham, in the hundred of Wrotham, comes, and being asked in what way he will acquit himself, defends the robbery and whatever is against the peace, etc., and for good and evil puts himself on the country. And the jurors of the hundred of Wrotham, and the jurors of the hundred of Axton, together with four of the nearest boroughs, say on their oath that the aforesaid Nicholas is in no way guilty of the aforesaid robbery, nor of any other misdeed ; therefore he is acquitted thereof." (m. 77d.)

* * * * *

Wrotham. "Juliana, the sister of John atte Hasele, apprehended for the death of Sibilla, wife of the aforesaid John, comes, and being asked in what way she will acquit herself, defends the death, and whatever is against the peace, etc., and for good and evil puts herself on the country. And the jurors of the hundred of Wrotham, together with four of the nearest boroughs, say on their oath that the aforesaid Juliana is in no way guilty of the aforesaid death. Therefore she is acquitted thereof." (m. 84).

* * * * *

"William de Crouhurst, and Roger le Soure, apprehended for burglary at the house of John le Rough', and for carrying off goods stolen from the same, come, and being asked in what way they will acquit

themselves, defend the burglary and whatever is against the peace, etc., and for good and evil put themselves on the country. And the jurors of the hundreds of Codesheth', Somerdenn', and Wrotham, together with four of the nearest boroughs, say on their oath that the aforeSaid William and Roger are in no way guilty of the burglary of the aforeSaid John le Rough's [house], nor of any others; therefore they are acquitted thereof," (m. 86d.)

Codsheath.
Somerden.
Wrotham.



PLEAS OF THE CROWN OF THE COUNTY OF KENT,
6 EDWARD II., A.D. 1313.*

"The Hundred of Wrotham."

"The same Drogo [de Chelesham] chief baillif, sworn."

"William Munte . . . sworn.	John Stefne . . . sworn.
Nicholas atte Ffen . . . sworn.	William Colyn . . . sworn.
Stephen atte Sole . . . sworn.	Edmund Sorang' . . . sworn.
Richard atte Hale . . . sworn.	Gilbert de Wynefeld . sworn.
Henry Moraunt . . . sworn.	Walter Godwyne . . . sworn.
William de Kanefold . sworn.	Richard Hendiman . sworn."

THESE gentlemen of the jury are not quite so obliging as their brethren of the earlier Roll, in revealing their place of residence by their names; nevertheless it is evident that in this case also they were well distributed throughout the Hundred. The boroughs of Hale and Winfield each sent one at least. Edmund Sorang' came from Stansted, where the name is found with a slight variation of spelling, in the manor of Soranks; and as the name of William Colyn occurs twice among a jury assembled at Stansted in the years 1322 and 1326, it may be concluded that he belonged to the same district. Nicholas atte Ffen most probably lived in the parish of Ightham, on the road leading north of the church, past Ightham Court, where there is still a pond which goes by the name of the Fen Pond. Stephen atte Sole—which in modern parlance would be Stephen

* Official reference :—" Placita Coronæ, 6 Edward II., Kent, M/2/34/9."
mm. 3. 4. 8. 8d. 9.

at the Pond—has not revealed his whereabouts with any degree of certainty. As a matter of fact there are singularly few ponds of any size in the Hundred of Wrotham; but it is not easy to determine which of them merits the honour of indicating the residence of this juror. Richard Hendiman probably owed his name to some skill of his own, or an ancestor's, in turning his hand to anything. A John Hendyman, possibly of the same family, figures in the list of persons who contributed to the Subsidy of 1327, mentioned later on. He there comes between a certain Thomas Coluerdenne and Laurence atte Holdenne. The final syllable in these two names points to the more thickly-wooded district, which would be found at the southern part of the Hundred; and as a matter of fact there was a place called Culverden in Shipbourne, within the limits of the district known as the Lowy of Tonbridge. This pretty old-English name points to the familiar haunt of the dove or wood-pigeon; the termination *den* or *denne*, signifying a woody valley, and *culver* being with our forefathers the ordinary word for a dove. We find it so used by Wycliffe in his version of St. John ii. 14, 16,—“And He fonde in the temple men sellynge scheep and oxen and culueris and money chaungers sittynge . . . and He seyde to them that solden culuers, takith away hens thes thingis.” The word is still in use in Devonshire. We may then perhaps hazard the conjecture that Richard Hendiman was a representative of Shipbourne. In this list Edmund Sorang' and Gilbert de Wynefeld are mentioned as the *electores*. The chief bailiff, Drogo de Chelesham, acted for the whole lathe of Aylesford,

his name appearing at the head of each of the eleven hundreds, one ville, and one half-hundred which composed the lathe, The names amount in all to 829, or about the same as in the earlier Roll. Then come the names of the five Justices Itinerant before whom the proceedings were held at Canterbury. And afterwards follows a list of those who had been sheriffs, and filled the office of coroner since the previous *iter*, seven years before.

“Pleas of the Crown of the County of Kent, held before Heruey de Stanton’, William de Ormesby, Henry Spigurnel, John de Mutford’, and William de Goldington, Justices Itinerant of the Lord King at Canterbury. in the Octave of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, in the sixth year of the reign of King Edward, the son of King Edward.”

“These have been sheriffs since the last *iter*, viz., John de Bourne, Henry de Apultrefeld, and John le Blount, who are deceased. William Trussel, John de Northwode, Henry de Cobham, junior, Warresius de Valoignes, William de Cosyngton’, Edward the son of John le Blount, who are still living; and John de Haudlo, who is now sheriff.”

“These have been coroners since the last *iter*, viz., Henry de Shorne, deceased, for whom Walter de Shorne, his son and heir, answers; Henry de Woghope, deceased, for whom John, his son and heir, answers; John de Saxynge-Herst, deceased, for whom William Alard, Henry de Berham, John de Chepstede, Joan, the daughter of John de Berham, Adam and John, the sons of Ralph de Musewelle, kinsmen and heirs of the aforesaid John, answer; John de Orlanston’,

deceased, for whom William, his son and heir, answers; William Baroun, deceased, for whom no one answers, neither has he lands or tenements, heirs or executors. And whereas such coroner is elected by the county, [therefore] to judgment concerning the whole county. John de Aldelose; John de Pyuynton'; John Malemeyns; Adam de Chyuenyngge; Nicholas de Bonyntone; Hamo de Beracre; and John de Ouene; who are still living, and answer for their time. Roger de Reyhamme, deceased, for whom John and Roger, his sons and heirs, answer; and Thomas de Croft, who is still living and answers for his time."

"The whole county makes presentment that no Englecherie is presented in this county. And whereas it has been ascertained by the rolls of the last *iter*, and by other rolls of preceding *itinera*, that Englecherie is presented in this county, in cases of felony only, and that for males, and by two, on the part of the father or mother, [therefore] to judgment concerning the whole county."

This statement shows that "Presentment of Englishry," though not formally abolished until the year 1340, had already fallen into disuse. All through the present Roll we meet with the stereotyped expression—*No Englecherie presented*. Presentment of Englishry, which, as previously mentioned, was retained, or rather revived, by the Conqueror for protection of the life of his Norman subjects, was to be made before the coroners at the time they made inquisition of the death. The proof was different in different counties; in some, the fact was presented by two males on the part of the father, and two females on the part of the mother, of the nearest of kin to the

deceased; in some counties by one of each; in others differently. The names of these persons were to be enrolled in the rolls of the coroners, and to be presented before the Justices Itinerant. If there was any doubt, either of what the relations alleged, or whether they were related to the party, the Englishry was to be declared *per patriam*, i.e., by a jury.

“THE HUNDRED OF WROTHAM COMES BY
TWELVE.”

Ightham. “Henry le Bresiere, who used to lodge at the house of Robert le Berker, in the borough of Eghtham, came to the house of the said Robert, and having found Matilda, the wife of the same Robert, by herself in the house, he instantly killed her, and took off the goods and chattels of the same Robert, and at once took to flight, and is suspected. Therefore let him be demanded and outlawed. His chattels are worth two pence halfpenny, for which the sheriff shall answer. The first finder and four neighbours are deceased. No Englecherie presented. Judgment: *murdrum* on the hundred. And whereas this happened by day, and the ville of Eghtham did not take him; therefore in mercy.”

Malling. “Robert Kenel and Agnes his wife, while on their way from the town of Mallyng’, met John le Swetere, the son of Walter Fferthyng’ and Walter le Ledyetere of Rogheyc, who made an assault upon the same Robert and Agnes, and killed Robert himself. The aforesaid Walter le Ledyetere at once took to flight, and is suspected. Therefore let him be demanded and outlawed. His chattels are worth fourteen pence halfpenny; for which the sheriff shall answer. The

Roughway.

same had land, whereof the year and waste are worth six shillings, for which the sheriff shall answer. And from issues of the same land in the mean time eighteen shillings, for which the same sheriff shall answer. And the twelve [jurors] concealed the aforesaid year and waste. Therefore to judgment concerning them. And the borough of Hale did not come in full to the coroner's inquest; therefore in mercy. And the aforesaid John le Swetere was hung elsewhere for the aforesaid death, in the presence of Luke de la Gare and his associates, justices appointed for the gaol delivery. He had no chattels. And the aforesaid Agnes, wife of the said Robert, and likewise four neighbours, are deceased." Hale.

Year and waste. In former times it was part of the king's prerogative to have the profits of lands and tenements for a year and a day, of those who were attainted of petit treason or felony, whoever might be lord of the manor to which the lands or tenements belonged. At first, it seems, the sovereign had only a right to commit *waste* on the lands of felons, by pulling down their houses, destroying their gardens, ploughing their meadows, and cutting down their woods. But as these proceedings, besides punishing the felon, were injurious to others, it was agreed in the reign of Henry I., that the king should have the profits of the land for one year and one day in lieu of the destruction he was otherwise at liberty to commit. Accordingly we find a provision in *Magna Charta* that the king shall only hold such lands for a year and a day, and then return them to the lord of the fee—there being no mention made of *waste*. But a later statute of 17th Edward II. seems to suppose that the

king had a right to his year, day, *and* waste, and not the year and day *instead of* waste. This was regarded by the jurisconsults as an encroachment on the part of the royal prerogative. It was a general practice to compound for the year, day, and waste, to prevent the Crown from exercising the right of entry.

“Walter atte Bergh’ and Adam called Serjaunt, of Wrotham, together with other unknown malefactors, came by night to the house of Robert Cok’, in the borough of Stanstede, and beat and wounded the same Robert, so that in fifteen days after he died. And the aforesaid Adam and Walter at once took to flight, and are suspected; therefore let them be demanded and outlawed. They had no chattels, nor were they in a pledge, because they were wanderers. Three neighbours come, and are not suspected. And Richard le Mellere, one of the neighbours, did not come, nor is he suspected. And he was attached by Richard Chun and Geoffrey Chun; therefore they are in mercy. And the boroughs of Stanstede and Eghtham did not come in full to the inquest held before the coroner; therefore in mercy.”

“William Corche of the hundred of Littlefeld, Elias le Wode of the hundred of Twyferde, Alexander Codi of Shibourne, William the son of Robert Lambert of Thrulegh’, Alic’ Grubbè of Gromenebregge, William the son of John Stace of Meredenne, Richard de Werehorne, of the hundred of Somerdenn’, and John the son of John Rad, of Eghtham, together with other malefactors unknown, came by night to the house of John de Wulford, in the borough of La Hale, and killed the same John Wulford, and a

certain Simon Cody, who was in the same house, and immediately took to flight. They are suspected ; therefore let them be demanded and outlawed. They had no chattels, neither were they in a pledge, because they are strangers. The first finder and four neighbours come, and are not suspected. Afterwards it was testified that the aforesaid Elias le Wode was subsequently arrested, and was hung for the death of the aforesaid John and Simon, before H. Spigurnel and his associates, justices appointed for the gaol delivery. And likewise the aforesaid Alexander Cody was hung before Luke de la Gare and his associates, justices appointed for the gaol delivery. Therefore nothing in the *exigent* concerning them. And it was ascertained by the coroner's rolls that Robert le Twynere, of Mallyng', received the afore said William Curch' and others ; therefore let him be taken. Afterwards it was testified by the twelve [jurors] that the aforesaid William, the son of John Stace, of Meredenn', was also arrested at Mallyng' and conveyed to the manor of Hallyng', which belongs to the present bishop of Rochester. Therefore he shall answer for him. Afterwards the aforesaid Richard de Werehorne comes, and says that he was acquitted elsewhere of the death of the aforesaid John Wolford and Simon Cody, before Henry Spigurnel and his associates, justices appointed for the gaol delivery of Maydenstan, &c. And for this he vouches the record of the rolls of the aforesaid Henry. And the rolls being searched it is found therein that the aforesaid Richard was acquitted of the death of the aforesaid John and Simon. Therefore he is acquitted thereof. And there is nothing in the *exigent* concerning him.

Malling.

Maidstone.

Wrotham.

Afterwards comes the aforesaid William, the son of John Stace, and being asked how he will acquit himself of the death of the aforesaid John de Wulford and Simon Cody, he defends the death and the whole, and whatever is against the king's peace; and for good and evil puts himself on the country. And the jurors of the hundred of Wrotham say on their oath that the aforesaid William, the son of John, is not guilty of the death of the aforesaid John, the son of Ralph, and Simon. Therefore he is acquitted thereof. And there is nothing in the *exigent* concerning him. Afterwards the sheriff testifies that the aforesaid Robert le Twynere is not to be found, but has withdrawn himself; and the jurors suspect him of having received the aforesaid Elias le Wode and Alexander Cody, who were hung. Therefore let him be demanded and outlawed. His chattels are worth nothing."

The above looks very much like an attack made by a band of burglars, composed of lawless characters from different parts of the county; and the fact that they had no chattels, and were not in any pledge, or borough, is suspicious. It was part of the Anglo-Saxon political system, and it was retained after the Conquest, that all males, except ecclesiastics, knights, and their eldest sons, should on reaching a certain age, be enrolled in a tithing, or decennary, which originally consisted of ten free families, who became mutually responsible for each others good behaviour. Each of these tithings formed a little community by itself; and from time to time one of its chief members was elected to act as the representative of the rest. He was termed the *headborough*, or *tithing-man*, or

borseholder, from the A.S. *borh*—a pledge, or surety, and *ealdor*—a head, or chief. If anyone committed an offence, inquiry would at once be made in what pledge he was ; whereupon the borsholder either produced the offender within thirty-one days, or, if he was not forthcoming, paid the amercement imposed on the tithing for the transgression. It was the duty of the sheriff at every county court, or of the bailiff in the hundred, to take the oaths of the youths as they reached the age of fourteen, and see that they were properly settled in some decennary. This office was called the View of Frank-pledge. It is said that in ancient times no person was allowed to remain in the country more than forty days, unless he became enrolled in some tithing. The following extract from Lambarde's "Perambulation of Kent," describes in quaint language the subdivision of the county into hundreds and tithings, and the appointment of the official who so often meets us in these Rolls. Speaking of the institutions of King Alfred, to whom, by the way, our old historians seem to attribute whatever legislative enactment is of obscure origin, he says :—"These shyres hee also brake into smaller parts, whereof some were called *Lathes*, of the worde *gelathian*, which is, to assemble together ; others, *hundreds*, bicause they contained jurisdiction over an *hundreth* pledges ; and others, *Tithings*, so named, bicause there were in eche of them to the number of *ten persons*, whereof eche one was surety and pledge for others good abearing. He ordeined furthermore, that every man should procure himselfe to be received into some *Tithing*, and that if any were founde of so small credite, that his neighbours would not become

pledge for him, hee should forthwith be committed to prison, least he might do harme abroad. By this device of his it came to passe, that good subjects (the travailing Bees of the Realme) resorted safely to their labors againe, and the evill and idle *Droanes* were driven cleane out of the hyve of the common wealth ; so that in short time, the whole Realme tasted of the sweete hony of this blessed peace, and tranquillitie : Insomuch, that (as one writeth) if a man had let fall his purse in the high way, he might at great leasure and with good assurance have come backe and taken it up againe. Some shadow I do confesse, of this King *Alfredes* politique institution, remaineth even till this day in those courts which we call *Leetes*, where these pledges bee yet named *franci plegii*, of the worde *freoborh*, which is, a free pledge. But if the very Image itselfe were amongst us, who seeth not what benefit woulde ensue thereby, as well towards the suppression of busie theeves, as for the correction of idle vagabounds, which bee the very seede of robbers and theeves. But leaving this matter to such as beare the sword, I will plie my penne, and go forward. Thus much therefore I thought good, now at the first to open, the more at large, bicause it may serve generally for all Shyres, and shall heereafter deliver mee from often repetition of one thing. Where, by the way, (least I might seeme to have forgotten the shire that I have presently in hand) it is to be noted that that which in the west countrey was at that time, (and yet is) called, a *Tithing*, is in Kent termed a *Borow*, of the Saxon worde *borh*, which signifieth a *Pledge*, or a suretie ; and the chiefe of these pledges, which the Westernmen call a *Tithingman*,

they of Kent name a *Borsholder*, of the Saxon words *borhes ealdor*, that is to say, the most auncient, or elder of the Pledges : which thing being understood, the matter will come all to one end, and I may go forward."*

"John Mabely, of Thanet, together with a certain man unknown, met William le Chapman in a certain place which is called Gatstaples, in the borough of Stanstede, and there made an assault upon the same William, and wounded him, so that he forthwith died. And the aforesaid John instantly after the act took to flight ; and is suspected. Therefore let him be demanded and outlawed. He had no chattels, and he was not in a pledge, because he is a stranger. The first finder and four neighbours come, and are not suspected. And Walter atte Clakke falsely presented himself as a neighbour ; therefore he is in mercy, by his pledge Henry Moraunt. No Englecherie presented. Judgment : *murdrum* on the hundred. And the boroughs of Wrotham, Wynefeld, and Hale, did not come in full to the coroner's inquest ; therefore they are in mercy."

Stansted.

Wrotham.
Winfield.
Hale.

The unfortunate William le Chapman no doubt was, as his name indicates, an itinerant *vendor* of small wares, who would be a welcome visitor at every cottage and homestead in days when there were few, if any, shops in country places, and fairs came round only at long intervals. It is evident that the general honesty which marked the days of king Alfred was not the distinguishing feature in the reign of the second Edward. Even in what Lambarde says of

* "Perambulation of Kent," 1596, pp. 26, 27.

the times in which he lived—the days of good Queen Bess—there is a perceptible sigh of regret that things were changed for the worse.

Wrotham. “Robert Reynold’ and John le Rede, when return-
 ing from the tavern of Wrotham, fought together in
 a place which is called Priourestighle, in the borough
 Hale. of La Hale. And the aforesaid Robert struck the
 said John on the head with a certain staff, so that he
 died therefrom the same night. And Robert at once
 took to flight, and is suspected. Therefore let him be
 demanded and outlawed. His chattels are worth
 fourteen shillings and four pence half-penny ; for
 which the sheriff shall answer. And the twelve
 [jurors] falsely appraised the aforesaid chattels ; there-
 fore they are in mercy. The same Robert had land,
 whereof the year and waste are worth six shillings and
 six pence ; for which the sheriff shall answer. And
 from issues of the same land in the mean time twenty
 shillings ; for which Master Michael de Berham, and
 the other executors of the will of Robert, late Arch-
 bishop of Canterbury, shall answer. The first finder
 and three neighbours come, and are not suspected.
 And Jacob de Custeune, one of the neighbours, did
 not come, nor is he suspected. And he was attached
 by John le Coupere and John le Erl ; therefore they
 are in mercy. No Englecherie presented. Judgment :
murdrum on the hundred.”

The Archbishop alluded to was Robert Winchelsea, who died at Otford, on 11th May, 1313. After his death the see remained vacant for more than nine months. The land which Robert Reynold’ held being in the Hundred, of which the Archbishop was owner,

or chief lord, the executors would be responsible for the issues of the land which had accumulated between the commission of the offence and the date of these proceedings.

“Elena, the daughter of Robert Richard, half a year old, was alone in the house of the aforesaid Richard, at Nepekere, in the borough of Rogheye, lying in her cradle; and a fire being in the same house, she was set alight through a puff of wind, so that the said Elena was burnt, and died immediately. No one is suspected thereof. Judgment: misfortune. And Roger Ffeagh, the first finder, did not come, nor is he suspected. And he was attached by Richard the baker, and Simon de Peancaumpe; therefore they are in mercy. And four neighbours are deceased.” Nepicar.

“Matilda atte Nare, Richard the son of Roger, aged four years, and Emma the daughter of Hamo de Mapelescombe, being in the house of Alice, the wife of Hamo de Mapelescombe, in the borough of Aldham, in their cots at night, the same house was set on fire by a certain candle which the aforesaid Emma had fixed in the same house, and the aforesaid Matilda, Richard, and Emma likewise, so that they died forthwith. No one is suspected thereof. Judgment: misfortune. The first finder and three neighbours are deceased. And Geoffrey the son of Broun, one of the neighbours, did not come. And he was attached by Thomas Ffundyng’ and Stephen Ffoghel; therefore they are in mercy.” Yaldham.

“John de Markham, eleven years of age, while leading a certain heifer by a string to its pasture in the borough of La Hale, wound the string round him. Hale.

And the aforesaid heifer suddenly taking fright as it went along, began to run, and in doing so dragged him over the ground, so that he died forthwith. Roger le Marchaunt one of the neighbours comes, and is not suspected ; nor is anyone else. Judgment : misfortune. The first finder and three neighbours are deceased. Value of the heifer four shillings, for which the sheriff shall answer. And whereas John Malemeyns, the coroner, falsely appraised the aforesaid heifer, therefore to judgment concerning him."

Wrotham. " John Janot, the servant of John Ffarman, fixed a certain candle in the cow-lodge of the said John Ffarman in Wrotham. And while the aforesaid John was asleep the candle fell down upon the straw, by which the whole place was set on fire, and the aforesaid John Janot was burnt in it. And John Wermond, the first finder, did not come, nor is he suspected. And he was attached by Stephen Moydekyn and Richard Tratoun ; therefore they are in mercy. And Robert, the son of Constance, and William atte Halk', two of the neighbours, did not come, neither are they suspected, nor anyone else. Judgment : misfortune. And the aforesaid Robert was attached by John Resy and William Randolph ; therefore they are in mercy. And William atte Halke was attached by Walter Nede and John Dygard ; therefore they are in mercy."

This is the third instance of fire attended by fatal consequences mentioned in the Roll, the number of victims being altogether five. It is not easy at the present day to realize how terrible a scourge fire must have been to our mediæval ancestors, whose dwellings were largely built of wood, and thatched with straw ;

and to whom fire-engines and *extincteurs* were unknown. In towns, where the streets were narrow, and the houses thickly clustered together, the consequences would of course be far more disastrous than in the country ; and that the danger was felt, is evident from the following regulation contained in the Customal of the town of Sandwich, committed to writing by Adam Champeneys, in the year 1301. Speaking of the office and duties of the common sergeant, he says that if, in his nightly rounds, "he discovers candles or fires alight in any house, he shall caution the people to be careful of them. Also, in dry weather he should see that every person has a tub of water at his door, for fear of fire ; upon forfeiture of one and twenty pence. And if any person refuses to place one there, or being warned by the sergeant shall neglect to appear at the nightly watch by himself or a substitute, the sergeant should take a distress to the value of one and twenty pence, and carry the same to the mayor's, there to be detained till the money be paid, unless the corporation please to favor the delinquent He is also to take care, that no boats lie in the creeks leading from the gates of the town to the haven, longer than one complete tide, under forfeiture of one and twenty pence ; in order that there may be ready access to water in case of fire or other accidents."*

"The jurors make presentment that Bartholomew, son of Sir Nicholas, parson of Mereworthe, William and John, brothers of the same Bartholomew, and Stephen Typoun, entered by night the rabbit-warren

Mereworth.

* See Boys' History of Sandwich, p. 504.

Ightham

of William Inge at Eghtham, and there with nets and other engines took and carried off about twelve rabbits, against the peace &c. Therefore the sheriff is commanded to make them appear &c. Afterwards the aforesaid Bartholomew, William, and John, came, and say that they did not go to the aforesaid rabbit-warren, neither did they take any rabbits there, as is imputed to them ; and for this they put themselves on the country &c. And the jurors say on their oath that the aforesaid Bartholomew, William, and John, did not enter the rabbit-warren aforesaid, neither did they take rabbits as is imputed to them ; therefore they are without day &c. Afterwards the aforesaid Stephen comes, and not being able to deny the trespass aforesaid, he paid a fine of ten shillings by his pledge, Henry de Bruton'."

William Inge was owner of the manor of Ightham in the reign of Edward II., after the family of Criol had been possessed of it for two or three generations. His name occurs frequently in the rolls of the period as one of the king's judges. This nocturnal raid upon his rabbit-warren by the young gentlemen of Mere-worth, must have been specially annoying, as he had only recently obtained charter of Free-warren, and had no doubt stocked it well for his own amusement. And besides being damaging to his preserves, it shewed very little respect for the high judicial position which he held. The fine of ten shillings inflicted on the one who was found guilty may not seem to us a very severe punishment, but it would probably represent at least £15 at the present day. The scene of this adventure is probably to be laid at a farm which has from time immemorial gone by the name of

"The Warren," in Ightham. The precise year of the occurrence cannot be determined with certainty : but it must have happened within the seven years previous to 1313, the date when these proceedings were taken before the Justices Itinerant at Canterbury. William Inge obtained charter of Free-warren in 1307. The original grant is to be found in the Charter Roll of that year, in the Public Record Office. As the historians of the county never give such documents in full, a translation of this particular one may not be uninteresting :—

"The King to the Archbishops &c. Greeting. Know ye that we have granted, and by this our charter have confirmed, to our beloved and faithful William Inge, that he and his heirs for ever have Free-warren in all their demesne lands in Eynesford', Eyghtham, and Stanstede, in the county of Kent, and Alwynle in the county of Suffolk. Provided that &c. So that &c. Wherefore our will is &c. Provided that &c. So that &c. These being witnesses : The Venerable Father J., Bishop of Chichester, our Chancellor, Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, Hugh le Despenser, Robert de Clifford', Milo de Stapelton', Steward of our Household, and others. Given by our hand at Notingham, the eighth day of October. By writ of privy seal."*

Eynesford
Ightham.
Stansted.

"The jurors make presentment that Laurence Shrep' of Westerham, Theobald le Wodeward, and Laurence Hoppe, of Bradested, together with other persons unknown, stole at Ealdham in Wrotham from Geoffrey, the son of Robert Ffilote, in the night, two

Westerham.
Brasted.
Yaldham.

* Rot. Cart. 1. Ed. II. no. 30.

cows belonging to the same Geoffrey, valued at twenty shillings. And from John Styward at Ealdham they secretly stole one ox, one cow, and one heifer, valued at thirty shillings. Therefore let them be taken. Afterwards the sheriff testifies that the aforesaid Laurence, Theobald, and Laurence, are not to be found, but have withdrawn themselves. The jurors suspect them of the thefts aforesaid ; therefore let them be demanded and outlawed. They had no chattels ; neither were they in a pledge, because they are strangers."

Ightham. "The jurors make presentment that Robert, the
Hartley. son of Geoffrey Aliz, of the borough of Eghtham,
and William Readhod, of Hertlegh', stole a heifer
which belonged to Thomas Ffaber, of Eghtham, and
Sevenoaks. having driven it to the town of Seuenaek', sold it in
the market there to a certain stranger for seven
shillings, and immediately afterwards took to flight.
The jurors suspect them ; therefore let them be
demanded and outlawed. The chattels of the afore-
said Robert are worth eighteen pence ; for which the
sheriff shall answer. And he was in the pledge of
John Ruter of Eghtham ; therefore he is in mercy.
And William had no chattels in this hundred ; but it
is testified that he has chattels in the hundred of
Axton. Akstane. Therefore let inquiry be made there &c.,
and concerning his pledge. Afterwards the jurors of
the hundred of Akstan' testify that the aforesaid
William had no chattels, but was in the pledge of
Thomas Ffaber, borsholder of Hertlegh' ; therefore
he is in mercy."

Winfield. "Katherine, who was the wife of Hugh Tryntrey, of
the borough of Wynefeld, was alone in her house in

the same borough, and when she had eaten a cake she was choked, and instantly died therefrom. And Adam Lyghtfot, the first finder, did not come, neither is he suspected, nor any other. Judgment: misfortune. And the aforesaid Adam was attached by Roger le Pret, and Roger Havedman; therefore they are in mercy. And four neighbours are deceased. And whereas the twelve jurors of this hundred did not make presentment of this misfortune in their verdict; therefore they are in mercy for the concealment."

It would appear from the earlier Roll that Hugh Tryntrey was at one time borsholder of Winfield borough.

"John de Hynton' put himself in the church of Stanstede, on the Sunday next after the feast of St. Faith, Virgin, in the sixth year of the reign of the present king, and acknowledged that he was a thief of fifteen †dies of the lord king, which he stole at Graueshende, in the house of Robert Snoubal; and there abjured the realm in the presence of the coroner, John Malemeyns.

Stansted.
8th Oct., 1312.

Gravesend.

"Afterwards it was found by the coroner's rolls that when the said John had stolen the dies aforesaid, and had taken to flight, he was followed by a certain Robert Gladewyne, and Roger Pentecoste, as far as a place called La Knocke, in the hundred of Akestane, in the borough of Kyngesdoun'; and they beat him there, and took away the aforesaid dies from him, and carried them off, together with three shillings and a

Knock.

Kingsdown.

† In the original the word is 'cuneus,' which means a die for stamping money.

penny, and his cloak which he had on, and likewise his girdle and knife, leaving him there only half alive. And thereupon came a certain Richard le Guette, at that time borsholder of Kyngesdoune, who, knowing that he had committed the said theft, commanded him to depart. Afterwards Cristina, the wife of the said John, came and put him into a certain cart, and brought him to the aforesaid church of Stanstede; and the same John, having been taken down from the cart aforesaid, entered into the said church, and remained there until the arrival of the aforesaid John Malemeyns, the coroner, before whom he abjured the realm.

Fawkham. "It was likewise found by the same rolls that a certain Michael Andreu, and William atte Wode, of Ffaukham, came on the day in which the same John abjured the realm &c. to the aforesaid church of Stanstede, before the arrival of the said coroner, and brought with them, on the part of the said Robert Gladewyne, and by the aforesaid Robert, the dies aforesaid and the cloak, putting them down before the said John de Hynton'. Therefore the sheriff is commanded to cause the aforesaid Robert Gladewyne, Richard * Pentecoste, Richard le Guet, and Cristina, Michael and William atte Wode, to appear. Afterwards the aforesaid Robert Gladewyne comes, and being asked in what way he will acquit himself of the aforesaid misdeeds, says that in no respect is he guilty, and for this puts himself on the country. And the jurors of this hundred, together with eight jurors of the hundred of Akstane, in which the aforesaid offence was committed, say on their oath that the aforesaid

Axton.

* A mistake for 'Roger.'

John de Hynton', after he had committed the said theft at Graueshende, came through the house of the aforesaid Michael Andreu, and there stole a certain hatchet, of the value of ten pence, which hatchet was the property of the aforesaid Richard * Pentecoste ; and the same Richard,* when he knew that his hatchet had been carried off, ran after the aforesaid John de Hynton', and coming up with him beat him. And thereupon came up also the aforesaid Robert Gladewyne. And they say that the same Robert took from the aforesaid John the dies aforesaid, three shillings and a penny, his cloak, girdle, and knife, retaining in his possession the aforesaid three shillings, the cloak, the girdle, and the knife, value sixpence. Therefore the same Robert shall answer to the lord king for the aforesaid three shillings and seven pence. And let him be taken into custody for the trespass. And whereas the aforesaid John [Malemeyns], the coroner, falsely appraised the chattels aforesaid ; therefore to judgment concerning him. Afterwards the aforesaid Robert paid a fine of ten marks for the trespass aforesaid, by his sureties William de Cumbe, and William Pykeman, of Swanscombe.

Swanscombe.

"Afterwards the jurors testify that the aforesaid Roger Pentecost is dead. And the aforesaid Michael Andreu comes, and says that he did not go to the church of Stanstede on the day in which &c., neither did he put there the aforesaid cloak or the dies. And he prays that this may be inquired into. And the jurors say on their oath that the aforesaid Michael is not guilty thereof ; but they say that the aforesaid Robert Gladewyne brought the said cloak and dies to

* A mistake for 'Roger.'

Michael's house, and handed them over to Michael's wife to keep &c. And they say that afterwards Robert Snoubal, Richard atte Wose, William le Ffisscher, William atte Wode, of Ffaukham, and John Cookson, of Graueshende, came to Michael's house, and took the aforesaid cloak and dies and carried them off to the aforesaid church of Stanstede, and there cast them down before John de Hynton', on the day he abjured the realm &c. And the jurors testify that the dies aforesaid were delivered over to Henry de Cobham, then sheriff &c. And the same Henry handed them over to the Treasurer and Barons of the Exchequer &c.

"And the aforesaid Richard le Guette and Cristina afterwards come, and say that at the time the aforesaid John de Hynton' was followed by the aforesaid Robert Gladewyne, and Roger [Pentecoste], who beat the aforesaid John de Hynton', they knew nothing about any larceny which the aforesaid John had committed; and they pray that this may be inquired into. And the jurors of this hundred, together with other jurors chosen for the purpose, say on their oath that the aforesaid Richard and Cristina were at the said time ignorant of any larceny having been committed by him; and that the aforesaid Richard [le Guette] never ordered the said John to depart, as was presented &c. Therefore they are acquitted thereof."

This extract has a peculiar interest for Stansted, for it reveals the fact that there was a church there, possessing privilege of Sanctuary, at the date mentioned—Sunday, 8th October, 1312. This information taken in connection with another historical fact may help to determine the age of the building within a

few years. In 1288 Pope Nicholas IV. granted the tenths of all ecclesiastical benefices to King Edward I., for six years, towards defraying the expense of an expedition to the Holy Land; and in order that they might be collected to their full value, a taxation by the king's precept was begun in that year. The province of Canterbury was finished in 1291, and that of York in the year following. The taxation was accurately made; and its importance is shown by the fact that all the taxes paid both to our Kings and to the Popes, were regulated by it until the grand survey, called the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, which was made by King Henry VIII., in the year 1534. In the list of churches given in Pope Nicholas' *Taxatio*, Stansted is not mentioned; it may therefore be assumed that at that date, 1291, there was no church in actual use existing. But we learn from the extract given above that there was one some twenty years later. From these *data* it may be concluded that the end of the thirteenth or early part of the fourteenth century witnessed the building, or re-building, of Stansted church, the architecture of which is not at variance with such a conclusion. There can be little doubt that the older portion of the existing building is the same as that in which John Hynton' took sanctuary. But it seems more than probable that a church was there in much earlier times, mention being made of a certain chapel at 'Stansteda,' or 'Stanstede,' in connection with Wrotham, in a document which figures in the *Textus Roffensis*, the date of which may be the first half of the twelfth century. It is a list of all the churches and chapels which were then in the diocese of Rochester. This may account for a large

block of very early masonry which is to be seen in the church-yard, at the N.W. corner of the building.

A recent visit to the church, under the friendly auspices of the Rector, and an ascent of the belfry-tower, brought to light the interesting fact that it possesses a pre-Reformation bell, bearing in black letter the inscription *Johannis est nomen ejus*. It is undoubtedly the oldest bell in the Hundred of Wrotham, and it may have been one of the earliest which the church possessed ; though it is not easy without further knowledge of mediæval Stansted, to say why it was dedicated to the Baptist. Possibly there may have been a Guild in the parish, owning him as their Patron Saint, by which it was presented : or it may have come from elsewhere. A fragment of stained glass, preserved in the vestry chest, depicts a church with a bell-cot in which is hung a single bell ; perhaps this may be an early representation of the church with the bell in question.

While on this subject it may not be out of place to say a few words about the probable age of the other churches in the Hundred.

Wrotham possessed a church in the year 1086, when Domesday Book was compiled ; the fact being recorded in the brief statement "A church is there." On the site of that early building the present church was no doubt erected at subsequent and perhaps widely different times, though the architectural details belong chiefly to the Decorated period.

Although none of the documents hitherto examined in illustration of this "Glance at the Hundred of Wrotham," mention any building or restoration of

the church, we may come to some conclusion about its probable age in another way, by noticing how church matters were going on at the time.

The early years of the reign of the first Edward saw as rector of Wrotham Peter Albi, Alby, Blanci, or Blaunc. He was a Savoyard, and had received preferment in England from his countryman Archbishop Boniface, who filled the See of Canterbury for more than a quarter of a century. Besides holding the rectory of Wrotham he was also rector of Lyminge, in East Kent. He was one of the executors of the will of Archbishop Boniface ; and it is in connection with this that he is first mentioned in Archbishop Peckham's Register. The passage, literally translated, is as follows :—

“ Brother Robert [Kilwardby], by Divine permission, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England, to [our] beloved son Master Peter Alby, rector of the churches of Wrotham and of Lymnyng', greeting, grace, and benediction. In order that you may be able to give your attention more easily and unreservedly to administering the affairs of the will of the lord Boniface, of good memory, our predecessor, we do, by the tenor of these presents, grant unto you for the space of five years, from the date of these presents, permission to farm out the fruits and profits of the said churches, and to convert to your own use the money obtained thereby. Provided that in the mean time some portion in corn or money be assigned to the poor of the same parishes, and that whatever defects there shall be in the ornaments or buildings are properly repaired. Given at Hadfeld' [Hatfield]

near St. Albans, the Nones of October, A.D. 1277, the fifth year of our consecration." *

It will be noticed that this permission was granted by Kilwardby, the predecessor of Peckham, only a short time before he vacated the primacy. It was confirmed by Archbishop Peckham in his first year, but with the addition of a clause providing for the *spiritual* needs of the parishioners, as if they had already been somewhat neglected :—

"Brother John [Peckham], by Divine permission, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primâte of All England, to [our] beloved son Master Peter Albi, rector of the churches of Wrotham and of Lymnyng', greeting, grace, and benediction. In order that you may be able to attend more conveniently to the administration of the will of the lord Boniface, of blessed memory, our predecessor, we confirm by the authority of these presents the favour granted you by the lord Robert [Kilwardby] our predecessor, of further study for the space of five years, provided however it truly and clearly appears that you diligently superintend the affairs of the will aforesaid. Provided moreover that none of the souls perish which are canonically entrusted to your care. When the term of five years allowed you is ended, we intend, if we are spared, to extend the favour to you, if meanwhile you are beneficent to the souls entrusted to you, as the law demands. Farewell in Christ and the Blessed Virgin. Given at Musteroil [? Montreuil], on the day of the Holy Trinity, in the first year of our consecration, A.D. 1279 †

Two years later it is evident that matters were not

* Peckham's Register, 9 b.

† Peckham's Register, 9 b.

going on satisfactorily, and it can hardly be doubted that the neglect previously hinted at had become a reality, and led to stringent measures being taken, for we meet with the following statement :—

“In the year of Grace 1281, 5th Id. July, at Slyndon, the lord [Archbishop] gave injunction by his letters to the dean of Shoreham to sequestrate all the fruits of the church of Wrotham, as well those that are in the granges as elsewhere, and to hold them in strict sequestration until he have further injunction. Also a like command issued on the same day, year, and place, to the dean of Lyme [Lympne], for sequestrating the fruits of the church of Lyming’ as well.” *

No reason is assigned for this act of sequestration ; it may have been simply to provide for necessary repairs to buildings, &c., but however that might be it did not have the effect of making Peter Alby look more carefully to his parishes, for, after no long interval, we find a letter from Archbishop Peckham, which reveals at once his own zeal and care for the diocese over which he presided, and the wretched state into which the parishioners of Wrotham and Lyminge had fallen both spiritually and temporally :—

“ Brother J[ohn Peckham] &c. to [our] beloved son Master Peter Blaunc, rector of the churches of Wrotham and Lymmyng’, greeting, &c. Lately making a progress through your churches aforesaid, we found the cure of souls in them altogether neglected as far as pertains to your office, and the poor parishioners, from want of a good steward, afflicted with hunger, and—that we may sum up in a few

* *Ibid.* 57 b.

words—defrauded of all temporal and spiritual consolation. Wherefore we have given injunction to our proctor, Master Poncius, for alleviating the want of the parishioners, whom you are bound to aid both temporally and spiritually, to distribute among the poor parishioners of Lymmyng' one hundred shillings sterling, and then to make a like distribution at Wrotham. For there has been so great scarcity at this time, that there is hardly one of them who has enough of his own to live upon ; nor, as far as we have heard, has there been anyone in your name to help the parishioners in their necessities during the whole of the time you have held those churches, for which cause without doubt you have offended the Most High, Whom we believe that we also have displeased, by allowing such conduct to pass by for so long a time under the shadow of dissimulation. It becomes therefore your honour, and will, we believe, be fruitful for the salvation of souls, for you to take an early opportunity of visiting for some days the cures entrusted to your rule, and of conferring with us on various matters, so that whatever has been omitted hitherto through want of knowledge on your part, may be supplied by your presence. . . . Given at Mortelak' 15th Cal. June [18th May, 1284].” *

Even this urgent letter failed to produce an effect, for after an interval of five months we find the Archbishop writing in much the same strain to Queen Margaret of France, whom Peter Blanci had accompanied abroad as chaplain, and who was a niece of the late Archbishop Boniface. The following is a translation of the letter :—

* Peckham's Register, 210 b.

"To the most excellent lady, Margaret, by the Grace of God, illustrious Queen of France, Brother John &c. [greeting] and true love in the Lord.

"In the things which concern your highest honour, most illustrious lady, and are agreeable with the Divine Honour, we confess that we are bound by your wishes ; and with a good conscience we declare that we are mindful of the favour shown by you towards us in various ways, while we were residing in France.

"Touching the request that you have made of us in behalf of Master Peter Blanci, your chaplain, to whom, as you write, you have entrusted certain of your affairs which are of a difficult nature, for him to arrange, we would assure your excellency how greatly it is in our heart that in your affairs he should in every way consult for your advantage ; and that we would gladly do the same, if it were possible, by offering you our personal services in this matter, being prepared to labour zealously for your advantage in those things which by the will of God we may do. Your Majesty ought, however, among other things to know that from the time when the said Master P[eter] received his benefices in England, on the collation of the lord B[oniface], of good memory, your uncle, and our predecessor, he has, as we are told, altogether neglected the cure of souls in them, and hitherto has in no way provided for his parishioners either temporally or spiritually, although every year he receives largely of their temporal things. Also he illegally keeps back the effects of the will of the said lord [Boniface], your uncle, which were to be distributed among the poor of the manors of the Archbishopric of Canterbury, by damnably neglecting to

carry out the last wish of the said testator. And although your uncle, when he was in his last moments, was not reminded how the buildings of the manors of the Archbishopric had been injured in his time and neglected, for the repairing and rebuilding of which, owing to his default, we have laid out more than 2,000 marks, nevertheless his executors are bound out of the effects of the said will, to restore and repair the defects of his time, seeing that our said predecessor was bound to do this himself while he was still alive.

“For these matters, therefore, and for others which are fraught with danger both to the soul of the deceased, and to Master P[eter] himself, the presence of your said chaplain with us is necessary, at least for a time, that he may make some provision for the souls entrusted to his rule, for which he has to answer in the dreadful judgment, and may free the soul of the deceased, which is burdened with such great perils. To the matters aforesaid let him therefore give diligent attention, in virtue of our forbearance, seeing we have hitherto overlooked his absence out of regard for you ; so that we may not be unwillingly compelled to act with greater severity towards him, and may allow him for the time to attend to your affairs. Farewell, your Excellency, in Christ evermore, and the glorious Virgin. Given 4th Id. October [1284].” ‡

These letters bear abundant testimony to the unhappy condition of the two large Kentish parishes which owned Peter the Savoyard as their rector. But the efforts of the Archbishop to bring about a better state of things would seem to have been unavailing ;

‡ Peckham's Register, 45 a.

and he bequeathed to his successor, Archbishop Winchelsea, the unpleasant task of dealing with as determined a non-resident as ever lived. The very first year after his consecration we meet with a letter written to the dean of Shoreham, directing him to sequester all the fruits and profits and other church goods of the rector of Wrotham "for certain and sufficient causes," and to hold them in strict sequestration until further order. The date of this letter is 4th Id. December, 1295. §

The next proceeding is an injunction from the Archbishop to the dean of Shoreham to cite the non-resident rector to appear. This comes early in the year 1298, and is as follows :—

“ Robert [Winchelsey] by [Divine] permission, &c. to the dean of Schorham, greeting.

“ Whereas Peter Blanci, who has held the church of the parish of Wrotham, in our jurisdiction, as rector, for no little time, and still continues to hold it, has not hitherto personally resided in it, as the cure of it demands, but just coming to it and making a very short stay there, and then betaking himself to distant parts, has withdrawn only too readily from the church aforesaid, as though he had deserted the cure of it, without permission from us ; We command and straightway enjoin you to cite, warn, and publicly and solemnly order the aforementioned Peter, by three several proclamations at proper intervals in the said church of Wrotham, to return to his said church and keep residence therein as he is bound. And you shall distinctly and openly certify us by your letters patent that you have done [what is enjoined] in the premises

§ Winchelsey's Register. 176 b.

before the Festival of St. Gregory, pope, &c. Given at Otteford', 3rd Cal. February [30th January], in the year of our Lord 1298, and the fifth of our consecration."**

This proceeding evidently had some effect, though it failed to bring about the end desired. It will be noticed that both in this and the following letter Peter Blanci is spoken of as rector of Wrotham only. Then comes a letter of reply from the Archbishop to the bishop of Amiens, who had evidently been enlisted in Peter's favour, and asked to intercede for him :—

"To the Reverend Father in Christ, the lord G. by the Grace of God bishop of Amiens, Robert [Winchelsey] by permission of the same, Archbishop of Canterbury, &c. greeting, and true love in the Lord,

"With regard to Master Peter Alby, rector of the church of Wrotham in our diocese, whom you affirm to be detained by severe bodily sickness, touching residence in his said church, which he by retiring long since from England without our licence being obtained, as is proper, seems to have deserted, who has been canonically summoned and waited for a long time :—We, out of consideration for your request, are willing of our special favour even to wait for him beyond the period of six months fixed by law, and to waive for the time the proceedings to be taken by us against him by reason of his non-residence; and in the other matters which ought to be transacted by him in our presence, we will extend to him whatever grace and favour we can, consistently with the good of our conscience. Farewell &c." ||

** Winchelsey's Register, 258 a.

|| *Ibid.* 262 b

No date is affixed to this letter, which in the margin is referred to as "Letter of reply to the [bishop of] Amiens touching the non-residence of the rector of Wrotham," but as the previous entry is dated 3rd Non. December, 1298, we may conclude that it belongs to the end of that year. Perhaps the most remarkable feature in the letter is the kindness and forbearance of good Archbishop Winchelsey towards one whom he did all he could to bring back to his parish, but who was evidently disposed to set at nought all ecclesiastical authority. Whether after this he gave up the case as hopeless or not, does not appear ; once more, after a very long interval, under date of 5th Cal. May [27th April], 1314, mention is made of the fruits of the rectory of Wrotham being sequestrated, and the custody of them committed to Nicholas de Bedynton', vicar of the same : † and then comes an entry under 14th Cal. August [19th July], of the same year, referring to dilapidations in the buildings belonging to the church and the dependent chapel, and to other defects, the repair of which, it is stated, rests with the rector, who is spoken of as being *deceased*.‡ It does not appear whether this was the notorious Savoyard or not ; if so, the silence of some fifteen years can be accounted for only by supposing that a vicar had been appointed to act in his stead, and that matters were in a less unsatisfactory state than at the beginning of Archbishop Peckham's episcopate.

At length, however, brighter days began to dawn upon the neglected parish, for the month of October,

† Reynold's Register, 8 b.

‡ *Ibid.* 56 a.

1314, saw a new rector in the person of John de Boreford', or Burford'. The document which records this is not without interest, and is as follows :—

“Walter [Reynolds] &c. to our beloved son John de Boreford', clerk, of the diocese of Salisbury, greeting, and grace, and benediction.

“In consideration of our love, we confer upon you the church of Wrotham, in our immediate jurisdiction, which is vacant, and to which we have the full right of collating; and institute you rector in the same, and likewise invest you therewith. In testimony of which thing &c. Given at Sautre, in the diocese of Lincoln, 16th Cal. November [17th October], A.D. 1314.” To this is appended the following note :—
“He also had a letter of induction directed to the dean of Shoreham, or his commissary, under the same date.” §

For ten years Wrotham must have rejoiced in having a resident rector, and it is not improbable that during this period both church work generally underwent a change for the better, and the fabric itself may have become more like what we see it at the present day. In the month of February 1324, the old enemy, non-residence, returned in the shape of a dispensation to John de Burford to be absent for two years; the document runs thus :—

“Walter [Reynolds] &c. to our beloved son John de Burford', rector of the church of Wrotham, in our diocese, greeting, grace, and benediction.

“We grant unto you special licence freely to lease and let to farm your church aforesaid for the space of two years, to be reckoned continuously from the

date of these presents. And that you may be in no wise bound to keep residence in your church aforesaid during the aforementioned time, we, for certain and legitimate reasons, graciously give you dispensation by the tenor of these presents; provided, however, that during the said term the cure of your church aforesaid be diligently exercised, and that it be worthily served on Sundays. In testimony of which &c. Given at Lamhuth' [Lambeth] the Ides of February, A.D. 1324." *

In the following August Master Richard de Steynton', chaplain at Mortlake, was instituted vicar of Wrotham, on the presentation of John de Burford rector, and took oath that he would keep continual residence in the same. **

Three years later, 13th Cal. May [19th April], 1327, at Langtoft in the diocese of Lincoln, Archbishop Reynolds admitted John de Lee to the vicarage of Wrotham, and instituted him perpetual vicar there on the presentation of the rector. This is the earliest instance met with of a *perpetual* vicar in connection with Wrotham. †

Thus for exactly half a century we are enabled by referring to the Archbishops' Registers, to gain a tolerably clear view of the state of church matters in the parish of Wrotham; and though not a word is said about any rebuilding or restoration of the church, it will be gathered that if such an event did take place within the period, it is more likely to have occurred in the comparatively short residence of John de Burford,

* Reynold's Register, 166 a.

** *Ibid.* 253 b.

† *Ibid.* 265 a.

than during the long and blighting rectoriate of Peter Alby, the Savoyard.

Shipbourne had a church in early times, though in Domesday Book no mention is made either of church or place. In the *Textus Roffensis* it is spoken of as being, with Capel, a chapel attached to Tonbridge, and with them it paid chrism rent to the mother church of Rochester. In the reign of Henry II., 1154—
 • 1189, Roger de Clare gave the church of Tonbridge to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, and it seems probable that Shipbourne passed with it, as in the seventh year of Edward II., Thomas de Woldham, Bishop of Rochester, certified to the King's Treasurer, in obedience to a royal writ directed to him, that the prior of that Order possessed the appropriation of the church of Tonbridge, together with the chapels of 'Schiburne' and St. Thomas, at Capel. They remained in the possession of the Order until the dissolution, in the year 1540. This fact may perhaps account for the church of Shipbourne being dedicated to St. Giles, who, as is well known, was the patron Saint of lepers. The knights of the Order of St. John from their long connection with the Holy Land must from time to time have been thrown in the way of the dreadful disease, and some of their number may even have been themselves afflicted. It is certain both from the large number of hospitals founded for the relief of leprous persons, of which there were nearly a dozen in Kent alone, and from the frequent occurrence in mediæval times of such names as 'le Leper,' that the disease was largely introduced into England by the Crusaders ; indeed at one time it

was so serious that it became a matter for legislation, as the following extract from one of Mr. Bardsley's interesting works testifies :—"We can take up no record, large or small, of the period without coming across a 'Nicholas' or 'Walter le Leper.' Leprosy was introduced into Western Europe with the return of the Crusaders. To such a degree had it spread in England, that in 1346 Edward III. was compelled to issue a royal mandate enjoining those 'smitten with the blemish of leprosy' to 'betake themselves to places in the country, solitary, and notably distant' from the dwellings of men."† It is not then unreasonable to suppose that among the churches possessed by the Knights Hospitallers there would be some dedicated to the patron Saint of lepers.* Besides Shipbourne there were about four other churches dedicated to him in the county. In cities where his churches are found they are almost invariably *outside* the walls, familiar instances occurring in St. Giles in the Fields, in London, and in the church of St. Giles, at Oxford, which is beyond the city wall. In addition to Tonbridge, Shipbourne, and Capel, the Knights Hospitallers owned the church of Hadlow in the same district; and in the adjoining parish of West Peckham they founded a Preceptory, where a branch of their society was located to collect rents and manage the land they possessed in the neighbourhood. The late church of Shipbourne was built in the year 1722, by Christopher, Lord Barnard; and is now replaced by a far more handsome building erected at the expense of

† See "English Surnames," second Ed. p. 193.

* By a curious coincidence the first name on a gravestone that caught the writer's eye, on a recent visit to Shipbourne, was that of "Lepper"!

Edward Cazalet Esq., of Fairlawn, and consecrated
6th August, 1881.

The church of Plaxtol which had not come into view at the time of this "Glance," enjoys the unusual distinction of having been completed in the year 1649, the threshold of a period in which the churches that were built were few indeed and far between. It will have been noticed how frequently the name of Hale borough, or La Hale, occurs in each of the Rolls; and one may conclude that it was a place of some importance in the Hundred. But, strange to say, the name has almost completely passed away, only a few of the old folk in the neighbourhood remembering it in their early days; and its exact locality is now a matter of some doubt. In the absence of any certain information there seems a probability, from its position in Hasted's map of the Hundred, that it was on the N. side of the more modern Plaxtol, and at no great distance; and it is not unlikely that the latter was once merely the *playstool*, or public recreation ground, of the ancient borough, though in process of time it has quite thrown it into the shade. To Hale, no doubt, considerable antiquity is to be assigned; and in default of a stately *heal* belonging to some Anglo-Saxon Eorl or Thane to account for the name, we might without difficulty find a still more ancient *aula*; for extensive traces of Roman buildings were discovered there, rather more than twenty years ago, when a wood was being grubbed up for hop cultivation. If this surmise be correct Hale points back to the time when the Roman legions occupied the country, and when one

of their officers made choice of the side of the pretty valley which Plaxtol overlooks, as a site for the mansion which was to contain his household gods—among them being a particularly elegant statuette of Minerva, which was found at the same place.* Hasted, in his description of Plaxtol, says,—“In the year 1647, an ordinance of Parliament passed, to divide this district from the parish of *Wrotham*, and by it a collection was directed to be made throughout this county towards erecting a parochial church here, and establishing a congregation proportionable to it. In consequence of which the present chapel was erected in 1648, which by an inscription at the *east* end of it, is said to have been built at the charge of the inhabitants of *Hale* and *Roughway Boroughs*; but this ordinance being rendered of no effect at the Restoration, Plaxtol became again united to *Wrotham*, and remains so at this time.”† Plaxtol was once more severed from Wrotham, and made a distinct ecclesiastical parish by an Order in Council bearing date 17th April, 1844.

Ightham seems to have possessed a church in early times. But as the name of the place is not mentioned in Domesday Book, it may be assumed that there was not a church standing at the time that document was drawn up—the end of the Conqueror's reign.

It is spoken of in the *Textus Roffensis* as paying 9d. chrism rent to the mother church of the diocese. In the oldest existing Register in the Library at Lambeth, that of Archbishop Peckham, there occurs,

* For an interesting account of these discoveries, see *Archæologia Cantiana* II. 1—8.

† History of Kent, II. 242.

under the year 1284, the following entry :—"Brother John"—*i.e.* John Peckham—"to [our] beloved sons Nicholas de Cryel and William de Kyrkeby, greeting, grace, and benediction. Know ye that we, upon your presentation, have for this turn admitted [our] beloved son Robert de Kemesyng', clerk, to the church of Eytham, in the diocese of Rochester and under our jurisdiction, and have instituted him rector in the same, saving the right which we possess in the said church from ancient time. Neither by this protestation do we intend to detract from whatever right you have in this particular. In testimony whereof we have caused our seal to be affixed to these presents. Farewell. Given at Towyn in the diocese of Bangor, 5th Non. July, A.D. MCCLXXXIV., and in the sixth year of our ordination." This letter is followed by another addressed to the new rector :—"Brother John &c. to [our] beloved son Robert de Kemesyng', sub-deacon, greeting, grace, and benediction. We admit you to the church of Eytham, in the diocese of Rochester and in our jurisdiction, which is vacant, on the presentation of Nicholas de Cryoll and William de Kyrkeby, for this turn, and institute you rector in the same with its rights and appurtenances. Saving to us and to our successors hereafter the right which is acknowledged to belong from ancient time to us in the aforesaid church. Farewell. Given at Towyn &c." Then follows a note to the effect that a letter "is written to the dean of Shoreham to induct him into the corporeal possession of the church aforesaid."* This entry is of some interest as handing down the

* Peckham's Register, 55 a.

name of an early rector of Ightham. Ightham also figures in the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* of Pope Nicholas, in 1291; for there can be but little doubt that the rather curious entry of "Eccl'ia de Esteham" represents the more modern Ightham, particularly as it comes immediately after Wrotham, under the same diocese and in the same deanery. It is there valued at twenty marks, which is exactly the same as the *Vicarage* of Wrotham; the church of Wrotham being valued at eighty marks. In the year 1315, William Inge obtained licence for a fair to be held annually at Ightham on the Vigil, the Festival, and the morrow of SS. Peter and Paul. This is a pretty sure indication that the church was flourishing there *then*; as in early times fairs had much more of a religious character about them than in later days, and were with very few exceptions held on the Dedication Festival of the church, and, until the reign of Henry VI., in the churchyard itself. This rule holds good in the case of all the annual fairs for which grants were made in the Hundred; thus, at Shipbourne, a grant was made in the year 1285 to Adam de Bavent to hold a fair there on the Vigil, Festival, and morrow of St. Giles;* in April, 1315, a grant was made to Walter Reynolds, Archbishop of Canterbury, to hold a fair at Wrotham on the Vigil, Festival, and morrow of St. George, martyr; and at Stansted, William Inge obtained, in Dec. 1315, leave to hold a fair on the Vigil, Festival, and morrow of the Assumption of the Virgin. Possibly the year 1315, which witnessed the institution of three annual Fairs in the hundred of Wrotham, to be held at the

* See further; p. 93.

Festivals of the respective patron Saints, may also indicate a period of church restoration and a revival of religious life. If so, William Inge who owned considerable property in Ightham and Stansted, may have had a hand in it. At any rate he seems to have been a public benefactor, as in addition to the annual Fairs he obtained a grant for a weekly market to be held on Monday at Ightham.

To return to the Assize Roll :—

Wrotham.

“ Robert Peny of Wrotham met John Heauedman of Mereworthe, in the town of Wrotham, and a dispute having arisen between them the said John struck the aforesaid Robert with a certain staff; and the same Robert struck the aforesaid John back again with a certain hatchet on the head, from which, on the third day following, he died. And Robert the son of Sarra, one of the neighbours, did not come, neither is he suspected. And he was attached by Robert le Tabour and William le Webbe; therefore they are in mercy. No Englecherie presented. Judgment: *murdrum* on the hundred. Three neighbours are dead. And the aforesaid Robert Peny was apprehended immediately after the act, and taken off to the prison of Maidstone. And now he appears. And whereas it was found by the rolls of John de Burne and his associates, justices appointed for the gaol delivery at Maydenstan, that the same Robert killed the aforesaid John Heauedman in defending himself, for which the same Robert was then remanded to prison at the pleasure of the lord king &c., he is now remanded to the same prison to await the favour of the lord king &c. Afterwards it was found, by the coroner's

Maidstone.

rolls, that William Pistor, the brother of Henry the baker of Wrotham, killed the aforesaid John Heauedman; also that John de Beccles, Richard de Peancompe, and Simon de Peancompe were present when the aforesaid William killed the aforesaid John Heauedman. Therefore let both the aforesaid William, and the said John de Beccles, Richard, and Simon be taken. Afterwards the aforesaid William Pistor comes, and being asked in what way he will acquit himself of the death of the aforesaid John, he defends the death and the whole, and whatever is against the peace of the king &c., and for good and evil puts himself on the country. And the jurors of this hundred say on their oath that the aforesaid William is not guilty of the death of the aforesaid John Heauedman; therefore he is acquitted therefrom. And the jurors in no way suspect the aforesaid John de Beccles, Richard, and Simon, of the death of the aforesaid John; but because they were present when the aforesaid Robert killed the aforesaid John, and did not take him, therefore they are in mercy."

"The jurors make presentment that William Ingge claims to have [right of] warren in all his demesne lands at Eyghtham and Stansted'; he likewise claims to have amends for breach of the assize of bread and ale, from his mesne tenants of the aforesaid manors; also pillory and tumbrel; they know not by what warrant. Therefore the sheriff is commanded to cause him to appear &c. Afterwards G. de Hertepol, who makes suit for the lord king, says that he proceeds against him by writ; therefore nothing thereof here &c."

Ightham.
Stansted.

We have already seen * that William Inge obtained

* See p. 45.

charter of Free-warren for his demesne lands in Eynesford, Ightham, and Stansted in the year 1307, a fact of which the jurors of the Hundred do not seem to have been aware. The other claims mentioned here were those which ordinarily belonged to lords of manors, and contributed to the increase of their revenues, breaches of law in early days being almost invariably punished by money fines. Ordinances regulating the making and selling of bread and ale, called in old documents *assisa panis et cervisie*, are of considerable antiquity, being met with in the time of King John, and still more extensively in that of his successor Henry III., in the 51st year of whose reign a statute was passed with a view to the protection of the consumer from fraud on the part of the manufacturer. By this statute certain punishments were awarded for breach of the assize, which in the case of slight offences were amercements, or fines, and for greater offences and repeated convictions the offender was to be set upon the pillory, the nature of which instrument of punishment may be gathered from a statute passed about twenty years later, which provides "that every pillory, or *stretch-neck*, should be made of sufficient strength, so that execution might be done upon offenders without peril to their bodies." The tumbrel seems to have been reserved more especially for offending members of the fair sex, who, by the way, were usually the brewers in those days. It was a kind of chair fixed upon a long pole, so that it might be swung over a pond, and the luckless occupant, immersed in proportion to the gravity of her offence. It has been supposed that the tumbrel, or ducking stool, was

invented expressly for offending brewers, or rather brewsters, but in process of time it came to be used as an instrument of punishment for scolds and other unruly women. So, too, the pillory was not confined to fraudulent bakers, but was used also for butchers and other tradesmen who had acted in defiance of the regulations affecting their particular line of business.

“Concerning liberties, they say that this hundred is a hundred of the Archbishop of Canterbury ; and the same Archbishop claims to have the return of all writs, and estreats of amercements, and to hold pleas of unlawful distress ; and he claims amends for breach of the assize of bread and ale in the hundred aforesaid ; they know not by what warrant. And whereas the Archbishop is deceased, and the Archbishopric is in the hand of [our] lord the King, therefore let [the matter] rest until &c. Afterwards, during the *iter*, an Archbishop was appointed ; and upon this the lord King directed his writ to the justices here, that all matters touching the said Archbishop should be determined in the next parliament ; which same writ is enrolled under the hundred of Petham.” Wrotham.

The rights here claimed were all sources of revenue for the Archiepiscopal exchequer, and it would appear must have clashed in some particulars with those claimed by William Inge, who held the manor of Ightham. Hundreds, like cities and towns, were commonly regarded as belonging to a superior lord, and they doubtless furnished a not inconsiderable part of the income which must have been needed to uphold the grandeur and magnificence which were

distinguishing features of the Feudal System. The Archbishop alluded to as having been appointed during this *iter* was Walter Reynolds, previously Bishop of Worcester, who succeeded Robert Winchelsey in 1313, and occupied the see for nearly fourteen years. His connection with the Hundred is marked by the fact that on April 17th, 1315, he obtained from King Edward II., with whom he was a great favourite, and who made him Treasurer and Chancellor of England, a grant to have a weekly market on Thursday at his manor of Wrotham, and an annual fair there at the time of the Festival of St. George, Martyr, the patron Saint

Stansted. "From the same sheriff, for the chattels of Clement le Ffrenshe of Stanstede, who was hung, five shillings and two pence."

Ightham. "From the same sheriff, for the chattels of Robert Bercar' of Eghtham, who was hung, two shillings and four pence."

Rochester. "Concerning new customs, they say that John le Englissh, of Rochester, Gilbert Goldewyne, John Hanecok', Robert Hanecok', John de Hampton', Adam Brid, William Jordan, and Clement le Chaundeler, burgesses of Rochester, stop and cause to be stopped all vessels and boats laden with flour, corn, hides, and other merchandise, coming by water to Rochester bridge; detaining them sometimes a week, sometimes three days at their quay in the same town, against the will of those who are going through with the vessels and boats aforesaid, so that they cannot pass Rochester bridge, nor go another way to sell their goods and merchandise in Maydenstan, Mallyng', and

Maidstone.
Malling.

elsewhere in the country at their will, without permission of the said John and others, and without paying them a heavy toll, to the great hurt and inconvenience of the whole country. And this [has occurred] since the last *iter*. Therefore the sheriff is commanded to cause the aforesaid John and others to appear. Afterwards the aforesaid John le Englissh and the others come, and say that they have not stopped against their will vessels and boats coming laden to the town of Rochester, neither have they taken any toll from them except the privilege of "fformarket," namely that they have the [right of] first purchase of saleable goods which come to that city ; and this they shew by charter of King Henry, which they produce &c. And they pray that this may be inquired into. And the jurors of this hundred, together with the jurors of the city of Rochester, and the other jurors chosen for this cause, say on their oath that the aforesaid John le Englissh and others are in no respect guilty of the aforesaid trespasses imputed to them ; therefore in this matter they are acquitted. And whereas the jurors disallow the presentment first made thereof by them ; therefore to judgment concerning them."

This entry shews that places inland were supplied with the necessaries and luxuries of life as far as possible by water, in an age when transport by road was both difficult and precarious ; and the fact that the Wrotham jurors were taking part in the question raised proves that the Hundred was interested in the matter, and felt the great hurt and inconvenience which are subjects of complaint. At this date Wrotham had neither a weekly market nor an annual fair

of its own, though it was on the eve of securing those advantages, and its inhabitants were no doubt in part indebted to Malling for what they required. For a supply of fish they probably looked to Gravesend, a subsequent entry mentioning the theft of a horse laden with fish on the top of Wrotham Hill, which may have come from that town.

“GAOL DELIVERY OF THE CASTLE OF
CANTERBURY.”

Wrotham. “Robert Peny, arrested for the death of John Heuedman, killed at Wrotham, comes, and being asked in what way he will acquit himself of it, defends the death, and whatever is against the king’s peace ; and for good and evil puts himself on the country. And the jurors of the hundred of Wrotham say by their oath that the aforesaid Robert is not guilty of the aforesaid death ; therefore he is acquitted thereof.” (m. 93)

In the margin of the original document there is written against this entry “error quia alibi.” It has been already mentioned ; but in the previous entry the accused was represented as being left in prison to await the king’s pleasure, while here he is spoken of as being acquitted.

* * . * * *

Bewesborough. “Walter de Stowe, residing at Bewesbergh’, arrested for stealing a horse of the value of one mark from
Wrotham. Robert Peny, in the town of Wrotham, comes, and being asked how he will acquit himself of it, says that he is a clerk, and therefore cannot answer for it here. And upon this come the before-mentioned William, rector of the church of St. Alphege, and

John, vicar of St. Dunstan's, in the performance of their office &c. and claim him as a clerk. And that it may be known how he should be delivered to them, let the truth of the matter be inquired into by the country. And the jurors of the hundred of Wrotham say by their oath that the aforesaid Walter is not guilty of the aforesaid theft imputed to him ; therefore let him be delivered as such &c." (m. 93)

The accused in this instance pleaded Benefit of Clergy, a privilege which is supposed to be implied in the coronation oath of King Stephen, and which comes very prominently into notice in the contest between Henry II. and Thomas à Becket. By it all clerics might decline to answer before the secular tribunals, and claim to be tried only in an ecclesiastical court. It seems, however, to have been concluded from the Statute of Westminster, in 1275, that clerks accused of felony should not be delivered to their ordinary until the matter of accusation had been tried by a jury. Such was clearly the case here ; and it can hardly be doubted that in certain cases the accused would prefer this course, especially if he felt that his innocence could be easily established, or if he had reason to believe that the charge against him could not be proved, for even if found guilty he could *then* plead benefit of clergy in arrest of judgment. The rector of St. Alphege and the vicar of St. Dunstan's in Canterbury, are frequently mentioned in this part of the Roll ; they evidently attended while the Justices Itinerant were in session to claim all who put in the plea of being clerics.

“GAOL DELIVERY OF THE ARCHBISHOPRIC OF
CANTERBURY.

Kingsdown.

“Giles, surnamed Bromheye, of Kyngesdoune, arrested for robbery committed against John Protuwyn, the servant of John Moris’, for stealing his clothes, and half a mark of silver, and a horse laden with fish, value twenty shillings, which were taken away by night on the top of Wrotham Hill,* comes, and being asked in what way he will acquit himself of it, defends the robbery, the theft, and the whole &c., and whatever is against the king’s peace ; and for good and evil puts himself on the country. And the jurors of the hundred of Wrotham say by their oath that the aforesaid Giles is not guilty of the misdeeds imputed to him. Therefore the aforesaid Giles is acquitted thereof. And the aforesaid Giles did not withdraw himself.” (m. 94)

Wrotham.

* * * * *

Ightham.

“Roger Skillemile, arrested for stealing a horse, value one mark, from Alexander Strocket’, and for stealing a horse from Godefrey de Cruce, of Eghtham, and for divers other thefts, comes, and being asked in what way he will acquit himself thereof, defends the theft and the whole, and whatever is against the peace &c., and for good and evil puts himself on the country. And the jurors of this hundred say on their oath that the aforesaid Roger is not guilty of the aforesaid thefts imputed to him. Therefore he is acquitted thereof &c. He did not withdraw himself.” (m. 96).

Towards the end of the Roll, just before the Gaol Deliveries, there is a note mentioning the names of

* In the original Roll,—*super montem de Wrotham.* †

those who continued to hold office as coroners when the proceedings before the Justices Itinerant were concluded, by which it appears that the number at that period was six, i.e. one for each of the five lathes, and one for the hundred of Milton :—"These continue coroners in this county, viz. John Malemeyns, of Hoo, in the lathe of Eylesford ; Reginald de Bokelonde, in the lathe of Sutton ; Stephen de Bokelonde, in the lathe of Scawynghope ; Robert de Wodhelle, in the lathe of Shypweye ; John de St. Nicholas, in the lathe of St. Augustine ; and Thomas de Croft, in the hundred of Middleton'."



SUBSIDY ROLL FOR THE COUNTY OF KENT.

A.D. 1327.

This Roll contains the names of the heads of families resident in the different hundreds throughout the county, who contributed to the *twentieth* granted by the laity to King Edward III., in the first year of his reign. At the end of the Roll, which for the most part is in excellent preservation and beautifully written, is a note of its delivery into the Exchequer on February 8th 1329, the amount being £1400 17 1½. Towards this sum total the Hundred of Wrotham contributed £15 8 2¾. In many of the hundreds the names of the *townships* are given, but not in that of Wrotham; it is therefore impossible to say what were the relative sizes of its four parishes. We may perhaps gain a tolerably correct idea of the population of the Hundred if we multiply the number of names by five.*

"HUNDRED OF WROTEHAM."

"STO'ILL,"

"Isolda Inge	xx.s. j.d.	Robert le	iiij.s. iiij.d. q.
John Godefrey	iiij.s. ix.d.	Richard le	xij.d. ob.
Peter le Meyster	xvij.d. q.	Thomas le	ij.s. j.d.
Richard le Ropere	xij.d.	John Kyng	xx.d.
John Roter	xvj.d. ob. q.	John Copp[er]le	ij.s. xj.d. ob.
William le Fullere	xij.d. q.	Benedict Wolfray	xxij.d. q.
William de Schybourne	xij.d. q.	Agnes Bertines	v.s. ob.
Philip de Strode	ij.s. ij.d. ob. q.	William Tailour	xiiij.d.
John de Pellesholte	ij.s. ij.d. ob. q.	John Gauelere	vj.s. v.d. ob. q.
Thomas Coluerdenne	ij.s. vj.d. ob.	 Fullere	ij.s. ob.
John Hendyman	iiij.s. v.d. ob. q.	 Frith	iiij.s. iiij.d.
Laurence atte Holdenne	xx.d. ob. q.	 [T]annere	xij.d. ob. q.
William Wygge	xij.d.		
Peter Cha. . . .	xxj.d. ob. q.		
Richard Ch. . . .	xv.d. ob.		
			Sum lviiij.s. ix.d. q.

* Official reference—Lay Subsidies, Kent, No. 123/10, m. 50, d. 51.

"CHAM."

Richard Tannere	xij. d.	William atte Hetche	ij.s. vj. d. ob.
John Curteys	xxj. d. ob.	William de Croulonde	iiij.s. iiij. d.
William Faber	xx. d.	Stephen Sterre	iiij.s. vj. d.
John de Bordesole	xxj. d. q.	John Styword	vj.s. vj. d.
Symon Vrry	ij.s. vj. d.	Nichola de Eldeham	viiij.s. iiij. d.
Richard le Bakere	iiij.s. j. d. ob.	Acard de Eldeham	iiij.s. iiij. d. q.
Nicholas de Mikelfelde	ij.s. vj. d. q.	Margery de Pecham	xv.s. ij. d. ob. q.
Stephen atte Hetche	xxj. d.	Matilda lues	xij. d. q.
William atte Scathe	ij.s. iiij. d. ob. q.	Mabel Hore	v.s. ij. d.
Roger Sorang'	xij. d. ob. q.	Thomas le Gegge	iiij.s. j. d.
William atte Hoke	xvj. d. ob. q.	John Hobel	ij.s. ij. d. q.
Robert Pany	ij. s.	Roger Bauant	vij. s. ob.
William de Osprenge	xij. d. ob.	Ralph de Stikelhelde	ij. s.
Stephen Campayn	xv. d.		
Henry Bakere	xiiij. d. ob.		
Alan Dressour	xiiij. d. ob.	Sum iiij. li. xiiij. s. viij. d. ob. q.	

"CLYUE."

John Jeames	xiiij. d. ob.	Hamo Godwyne	vij. s. ob.
Richard atte Hale	xviij. d. q.	William Mounte	xiiij. s. q.
Roger atte Hale	iiij. s. vj. d. ob. q.	Peter Renger	xviij. d. ob.
Walter Masoun	ij. s. v. d.	Lambert Tannere	ij. s. v. d. q.
Robert de Wynefeld	ij. s. viij. d. ob.	Thomas atte Hothe	xxj. d.
William atte Bissehe	iiij. s. q.	Richard de Nepakere	v. s. q.
John de Ledes	ij. s. iiij. d. ob.	John atte Hothe	ij. s. ob. q.
Richard atte Hale	vj. s. ob.	*Geoffrey Gilbert	vj. s. viij. d.
John atte Venne	xix. d. q.	*Richard Tebaud	vj. s. viij. d.
William Acard	vj. s. q.	*William Colyn	vj. s. viij. d.
Walter le Bounde	xxj. d.	*Stephen Fareman	vj. s. viij. d.
Richard le Bounde	xiiij. s. vj. d.		
Nicholas atte Venne	viiij. s.	Sum vj. li. xiiij. s. viij. d. ob. q.	
Ralph Strokot	v. s. ob. q.		
Stephen atte Sole	ij. s. vj. d.		
Richard Herchamp	xij. d. ob.	Sum of the Hundred of Wrotham :—	
Robert atte Sole	xx. d. ob. q.	xv. li. viij. s. ij. d. ob. q.*	
Peter Ordrieh	viiij. s. ij. d.		

Many of these names have already come under notice in the preceding Assize Rolls. It only remains to say a few words about one or two of the families which held a high position, and may be considered to have represented the aristocracy of the Hundred.

The first on the list, and by far the largest contributor to the Subsidy, is Isolda Inge. Philipott in his "Villare Cantianum," published in 1659, speaking of Ightham, says,—“The Mannor of *Eightam* itself, was

* In the original Roll the word "Taxat'," is written against these four names; they were no doubt the assessors for the parochial divisions of the Hundred.

the Possession of *William de Inge*, one of the Judges in the reign of *Edward* the second : this *William de Inge* was by his Country and Parentage of the County of *Bedford*, and had issue *William de Inge*, who matched with *Margery*, Daughter of *Henry Grapenell*, and dyed seised, in the fifteenth of *Edward* the second, of this Mannor of *Eightham* : his Daughter and Heir *Joan* was wedded to *Eudo* Lord *Zouch of Harringworth, &c.*" † And, later on, in his description of Stansted, he says that an "Ancient Family called *Grapinell*, . . . were once owners of this place, and flourished here under the Scepter of *Henry* the third, and *Edward* the first : but going out in Daughters and Co-heirs, *Margeria* one of them, by matching with *William de Inge*, who was a Judge, in the reign of *Edward* the second, knit this Mannor to the Inheritance of this Family, and he died seised of it, in the fifteenth year of *Edward* the second,

. . . and left it to his only Daughter and Heir, in an old Pedigree called *Isolda* : but more truly *Joan* ; for in the Inquisition taken after the death of *Eudo la Zouch*, to whom she was matched

. . . it is found that he held this Mannor in Right of his Wife *Joan*, Sole Heir of *William de Inge*." *

Probably this *Joan*, or *Isolda*, the daughter and heiress of *William Inge*, and widow of *Eudo la Zouch*, is the same as the *Isolda Inge* first mentioned in the Subsidy Roll. If so, there was good reason, as will appear presently, why she should have preferred her maiden name to that of *Zouch*.

The *Inquisitio post mortem* of *William Inge* gives such a distinct view of his possessions in the Hun-

† See p. 140. * See p. 304.

dred, and is in other respects so full of interest, that a translation of it shall be given here :—

“Edward, by the grace of God, King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine, to his beloved Clerk, Master John Walewayn, his Escheator on the other side Trent, greeting.

“Whereas William Inge, who held of us *in capite*, is deceased, as we have heard, we command you to take into our hand, without delay, all lands and tenements of which the same William was seised in his demesne as of fee, in your bailiwick, on the day of his death ; and that you cause them to be safely kept until we give you further precept. And that by the oath of good and lawful men of your bailiwick, by whom the truth of the thing may be better known, you diligently inquire how much land the same William held of us *in capite*, in your bailiwick, on the day of his death, and how much of others, and by what service, and how much those lands are worth *per annum* in all issues, and who is his next heir, and of what age. And that the Inquisition thereof distinctly and openly made, you send to us without delay, under your seal and the seals of those by whom it is made, and this Writ. Witness myself at York, the tenth day of May, in the fifteenth year of our reign. [1322].

“Inquisition held at Eynesford, before the Escheator of the lord King on this side Trent, on Wednesday next after the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, in the fifteenth year of the reign of King Edward, son of King Edward, by the oath of Robert le Lad, Henry le Lad, Nicholas de la Mare, William de Orkesdene, John Sorank', Hamo de Merstone,

William Colyn, Geoffrey Gylberd', Ralph de Wolford', John de Berdesole, Simon the Clerk, and Stephen de Sethe, who say upon their oath that William Inge held nothing of the lord King *in capite* in the county of Kent, on the day of his death.

"Eghtham." Also they say that the aforesaid William held the manor of [Eg]htham, and a moiety of the manor of Eynesford, in the aforesaid county, of the lord Archbishop of Canterbury, by service of half a knight's fee, and a fourth part of a knight's fee. Also they say that the chief messuage of the manor of Eghtham is worth 6s. 8d. *per annum*. Also they say that there are 100 acres of arable land there, and that an acre is worth 4d. *per annum*, whereof the sum is 33s. 4d. Also they say that there are 10 acres of meadow there, and that an acre is worth 18d. *per annum*, whereof the sum is 15s. Also they say that there are 40 acres of pasture there, and that an acre is worth 2d. *per annum*, whereof the sum is 6s. 8d. Also there is a watermill there, and it is worth 40s. *per annum*. Also there are from rents of assize there 100s. *per annum*, at the four terms of the year. Also pleas and perquisites of court are worth 6s. 8d. *per annum*. Accordingly the aforesaid manor is worth *per annum* in all issues £10. 8s. 4d.

"Eynesf." Also they say that the chief messuage of the moiety of the manor of Eynesford is worth 40d. *per annum*. Also they say that there is a dove-cot there which is worth 40d. *per annum*. Also they say that there are 80 acres of arable land there, and that an acre is worth 4d. *per annum*, whereof the sum is 26s. 8d. Also they say that there are 7 acres of meadow there, and that an acre is worth 18d. *per*

annum, whereof the sum is 10s. 6d. Also they say that there are 40 acres of pasture there, and that an acre is worth 2d. *per annum*, whereof the sum is 6s. 8d. Also there is a watermill there, which is worth 20s. *per annum*. Also there are from rents of assize there 10 marks *per annum*, at the four chief terms of the year. Also pleas and perquisites of court there are worth 6s. 8d. *per annum*. Accordingly the moiety of the aforesaid manor is worth, in all issues, £10. 10s. 6d. *per annum*.

"Also they say that a certain fine was levied in the court of our lord the King between the aforesaid William Inge, Isolda his wife, and Ffremond Inge, plaintiffs, and Master Robert Inge, deforciant; to wit, that the aforesaid Master Robert granted unto the aforesaid William, Isolda, and Ffremond a moiety of the manors of Eghteham and Eynesford', together with other manors in other counties, to have and to hold to the same William, Isolda, and Ffremond, and the heirs which the same William shall have by Isolda. And if it happen that the aforesaid William die without having an heir by the said Isolda, then after the decease of the same William, Isolda, and Ffremond, the said moiety of the aforesaid manors to remain to the right heirs of William aforesaid. Also they say that the aforesaid William and Isolda conjointly acquired the other moiety of the manor of Eghteham from Nicholas Kyryel, to have and to hold to the aforesaid William, Isolda, and the heirs of the said William, of the chief lords of the fee, by the services thereof due and accustomed.

"Also they say that the aforesaid William held the manor of Stanstede in the said county, of the said "Stansted'."

lord Archbishop of Canterbury, in Gauelykende [Gavelkind], by the service of 37s. 0½d. *per annum*, for all services. And they say that the chief messuage of the same manor is worth 2s. 6d. *per annum*. Also they say that there are 90 acres of arable land there, and that an acre is worth 4d. *per annum*, whereof the sum is 30s. Also there are 40 acres of pasture there, and an acre is worth 2d. *per annum*, whereof the sum is 6s. 8d. Also there is a windmill there, and it is worth 20s. *per annum*. Also from rents of assize there £4. 10s. *per annum*, at the four chief terms of the year. Also pleas and perquisites of court are worth 4s. *per annum*. Accordingly the said manor is worth in all issues £7. 13s. 2d. *per annum*.

"Also they say that Joan, the daughter of the same William, who is married to Eudo la Souche Kt. is the next heir of the same William, and is of the age of twenty-three years and more.

"In testimony of which thing the seals of the jurors aforesaid are attached to this Inquisition, the day and year above mentioned."*

In addition to its historical importance this document is interesting as showing the value of the several parts of an estate in the Hundred at the commencement of the fourteenth century. It may surprise some to hear that a dovecot was considered as of equal value with the chief messuage of the manor; but such was the case at Eynesford, each being appraised at 3s. 4d. *per annum*. Meadow land was particularly valuable, being worth nine times as much as pasture, and nearly five times as much as arable land. Wherever sufficient water power existed there was

* "Inquis. post mortem," 15 Ed. II. no. 42, Kent. m. 8.

sure to be a mill, at which of course the lord's under-tenants would be expected to have their corn ground. This was an important source of income, and was valued at 20s. at Eynesford, and twice that amount at Ightham. At Stansted. which did not possess a stream, both meadow land and watermill are wanting ; but the latter was compensated for by the presence of a windmill which proved quite as lucrative as the Eynesford watermill. The joint value of the Ightham and Stansted manors is £18. 1s. 6d. which at the present day would probably represent some £550.

When it is stated that William Inge had other estates in Essex, Suffolk, Sussex, Hampshire, Oxford, Hertfordshire and Bedford, it will be seen that he was a large landed proprietor, and must have held a high position among his contemporaries.

At the risk of taxing patience one more document of a similar kind shall be given. It is the *Inquisitio post mortem* of Joan Inge's husband, Eudo la Zouch, who died in the year 1326. It has peculiar interest for Stansted ; and it mentions the value which was attached to poultry &c. which the previous Inquisition did not.

" Edward, by the grace of God, King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine, to his beloved William de Weston', his Escheator in the counties of Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Middlesex, and in the city of London, greeting:

" Joan, who was the wife of Eudo la Zouch, and the daughter and heir of William Inge, lately deceased, has besought us that whereas the before named Eudo, her late husband, now deceased, held divers lands and tenements, in your bailiwick, of the

inheritance of the said Joan, and the same lands and tenements, together with the lands and tenements which belonged to the same Eudo, were by reason of a certain felony, whereof he was indicted, taken into our hand, and for that reason retained in our hand ; our will is that the said lands and tenements which are part of her inheritance be delivered over to the same Joan.

“ Now, in order that in this particular we may allow her a breach of justice, we, wishing to be certified what lands and what tenements the before named Eudo held of the inheritance of the aforesaid Joan, and what lands and what tenements of his own inheritance, and where, and of what person or persons they are held, and by what service, and how much they are worth *per annum* in all issues, according to their true value, and whether the aforesaid lands and tenements were taken into our hand for the reason aforesaid, or for any other reason, and if for another then what, and how, and in what manner, and whether the aforesaid Eudo is deceased or not, and if so then at what time and where, command you that by the oath of good and lawful men of your bailiwick, by whom the truth of the thing may be better known, you make diligent inquiry into all and singular the matters aforesaid and their circumstances, and that you send the same distinctly and openly made, to us without delay, under your seal and the seals of those by whom it is made, and this writ. Witness myself at Westminster, the fifteenth day of July, in the twentieth year of our reign. [1326]

Inquisition made at Stanstede, before the Escheator of our lord the King, in the county of Kent, on

Thursday next after the feast of St. Mary Magdalene, in the twentieth year of the reign of King Edward, son of King Edward, by the oath of William Colyn, Thomas de Eyton', William de Orkesden', John Godfrei, Robert de Kacote, Gilbert [? his] son, William Smyth', Henry Ffareman, Stephen atte Hetche, Peter le Maister, John de Berdesole, and Richard le Bakere.

"Who say upon their oath that Eudo la Zouche held on the day of his death, of the inheritance of Joan his wife, the moiety of one windmill which is worth 10s. *per annum*, according to its true value. Of free and quit rent 14s. 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. The rent of six ploughshares, value 5s. Rent of thirty hens, value 3s. 9d., and rent of forty eggs, value 4d., in the manor of Stånstede in the said county of Kent. And that the same manor, together with the parts aforesaid, is held of the lord Archbishop of Canterbury, by the service of 32s. *per annum* for all service.

"Also they say that the aforesaid Eudo did not hold any other lands or tenements in the said county, of the inheritance of the aforesaid Joan his wife, nor of his own inheritance. Also they say that the aforesaid Eudo was indicted for the death of a certain Roger de Belers ; and through fear of this indictment the same Eudo went abroad without permission from our lord the King ; for which reason the said lands and tenements were taken into the hand of our lord the King, and for no other. And they say that the said Eudo died at Paris, on Sunday next after the feast of St. Mark the Evangelist last past, according as Thomas de Eyton', one of the jurors aforesaid, who was present there, fully testifies.

"In testimony of which thing the aforesaid jurors

have attached their seals to this Inquisition."*

If the Joan mentioned here was the same person as Isolda in the Subsidy Roll of the following year, it is easy to understand that she should have preferred to be called by her maiden name rather than by that of Zouch. The family of Inge do not seem to have been connected with the Hundred of Wrotham for more than two or three generations. Long since they have passed away, and their place knows them no more ; but the name survives in the parish of Stansted, where there is to this day a farm called "Inge's Farm," which clearly points to the once influential family.

The family of Sorangs, or Soranks, were at this period connected with a manor of the same name in the parish of Stansted. Two members of the family have already come under notice ; Edmund Sorang', who was one of the *electores* of the jury in the second Assize Roll, of 1313, and John Sorank' being among the jurors assembled at the *Inquisitio post mortem* of William Inge in 1322. In the list of persons who contributed to the Aid for making the Black Prince a Knight, in 20 Edward III., Roger Soranke appears as the holder of a quarter of a knight's fee, which Edmund Soranke had previously held in Stansted, and for which he pays 10s., being at the rate of 40s. for a whole knight's fee, which was considered to represent about 640 acres.† It does not appear that their connection with the Hundred was of very long duration, as in the following reign the manor of

* "Inquis. post mortem," 20 Ed. II. no. 31, Kent.

† Arch. Cant. x. 150.

Soranks had passed into the possession of another family.

The family of Aldham, or Eldeham, were connected with the Hundred of Wrotham at a very early date, as has been previously stated. Sir Thomas de Aldham who lived in the reign of Edward II., and was a descendant of Sir Thomas de Aldham of Crusade celebrity, died leaving only heiresses which led to a division of his estate. John St. Clere married Isolda and came into possession of the part in Ightham parish; and Martin Peckham who married Margery, another daughter, acquired the remaining portion which was in Wrotham, in the possession of whose descendants it remained until early in the last century. About the year 1220, we find Robert de Eldeham granting to the Priory of Cumbwell a rent charge of 2s. payable annually at his house of Eldeham. This grant was evidently drawn up at Yaldham, as among the witnesses are not only two other members of the family, Thomas de Eldeham and William de Eldeham, but also Sir Anselm, vicar of "Wroteham," and Bartholomew, chaplain of the same place. Anselm must have been one of the earliest vicars of Wrotham. Possibly Bartholomew was the chaplain who served Stansted; at any rate it appears by a decree of Archbishop Islip, in the following century, that it was the duty of the vicar of Wrotham to "find one fit chaplain to celebrate in the chapel of Stansted." About a quarter of a century after the date of this grant, in the year 1245, we find John son of Robert de Eldeham confirming the same to the Priory of Cumbwell, and further adding to it 2s. from himself.† The

† Arch. Cant. viii. 278. 279.

Acard de Eldeham of the Subsidy Roll is no doubt the Achardus de Aldham mentioned in a Fine of 5 Edward II., who acquired 1 messuage, 150 acres of land, 6 acres of meadow, 25 acres of wood, 10s. rent and the rent of 12 hens and 60 eggs, with appurtenances, in Wrotham, from Edmund son of Laurence de Polle.* None of the family are mentioned in connection with the Hundred of Wrotham as contributing to the Aid for knighting the Black Prince, in 20 Edward III.

Margery de Pecham who appears in the Subsidy Roll, and contributed the next largest sum after Isolda Inge, was one of the three daughters of Sir Thomas de Aldham, and the wife of Martin Peckham, who was son of John Peckham and a descendant of John de Peckham who accompanied Richard I., on his expedition to the Holy Land in 1191. Their son John de Peccham is mentioned in the Aid to knight the Black Prince as a contributor of 10s. for the fourth part of a knight's fee which Martin de Peccham held in Ealdeham.† The names of several members of the family occur in the history of the county as having filled important offices; thus, James Peckham was sheriff in 1379, and again nine years later. Another of the same name was sheriff in the 12th year of Edward IV. Reginald was sheriff in 24 Henry VII., and also Esquire of the Body Guard of Henry VIII. He died 27th February, 1525, and was buried in Wrotham church, where his brass is still to be seen, together with those of other members of the same family.

* Arch. Cant. xi. 345.

† Arch. Cant. x. 150.

The Bavents were a Norman family, and came originally from a place of the same name in the neighbourhood of Caen. Their possessions in this country were chiefly in Suffolk, Surrey, and Sussex; but they were connected with the Hundred of Wrotham as holders of the manors of Shipbourne and Fairlawn. By the Charter Roll of 13 Edward I., we find the King granting "to his beloved and faithful Adam de Bavent and his heirs for ever" Free warren in all their demesne lands of Cocking', Hyen, Hiringham, Wisteneston', Chiltinton', and Bungeton', in the county of Sussex; in Hatchesham, and Putfeld' in Surrey; in Shipborn', and Halling' in Kent; and in Brandeston' and Cambes in Suffolk. Also a weekly market on Thursday, and an annual fair to last three days, at their manor of Cocking'. Also a weekly market on Monday, and an annual fair, lasting three days, on the Vigil, Festival, and morrow of St. Giles, Abbot, at their manor of Shipborn'. The date of this grant is 1st August, 1285; and among the witnesses are Robert, bishop of Bath and Wells, Anthony, bishop of Durham, Stephen, bishop of Waterford, Otho Grandison, Richard de Brus, and others.* Fifteen years after this he was present with his sovereign at the siege of Caerlaverock in Scotland, † and was among the number of Kentish gentlemen, about fifty in all, who were knighted on that occasion. This was in the year 1300. Very shortly afterwards he must have died, as in an interesting document of

* Rot. Cart. 13 Edward I. m. 7.

† According to Philipott in his description of Shipbourne; though he does not include him in the list which he gives elsewhere. It was on this occasion that a small but determined garrison of about sixty men withstood for a considerable time the assaults of a powerful army under Edward I.

the following year, extant in the Public Record Office, he is spoken of as deceased. The document referred to is the "Probatio Ætatis" of his son Roger Bavent, who figures on the Subsidy Roll of 1327 as paying 8s. 0½d. towards the *twentieth* granted by the laity to Edward III. in his first year. Before giving the chief contents of this document, which is so minute in its details as to mention not only the day of birth and of baptism, but even the names of the officiating cleric and the God-parents, it may be well to say that a "Proof of Age" was required from the heir of every tenant *in capite*, i.e. by knight service. On the death of such a tenant, if his heir was under age, the King, by his prerogative, took the lands into his own hand as guardian, and either retained them himself or granted the custody of them to some reliable person who should act in his stead till the heir arrived at full age. When that time came the heir in order to obtain his lands out of the hand of the King, sued for a writ "*de ætate probanda*," which was forthwith issued to Commissioners, as well as to the escheator, to inquire into the age of the heir, another writ being issued to the sheriff to summon a jury before the commissioners on an appointed day. The jury returned their verdict on oath; and the heir if proved of age obtained livery of seisin of his lands.

In the present instance the persons commissioned by the King to act as guardians during the minority were William de Hamelton', Henry de Cobham, William atte Ffelde, and Andrew de Neuile; the last named filling the place previously occupied by Albertine Ffulberd. The case was heard before the

King in Michaelmas Term 1301, and twelve witnesses gave their evidence :—

“Ralph de Gatewayk’, fifty years of age and more, living at Stanynge [Steyning], and at a distance of half a league from the aforesaid *ville* of Wistaneston’ [Wiston], being sworn and carefully examined about the age of the aforesaid Roger, says that the said Roger was the son of Adam de Bauent, and his heir &c., and that he is twenty-one years of age, and was so on Friday next before the Festival of the Annunciation of the Blessed Mary, last past. Being asked where the aforesaid Roger was born, he says that he was born at Wistaneston’, and was baptized in the parish church of that *ville* by a certain priest named John. He also says that a certain William Bernehou and Roger de la Hyde were the Godfathers of the said heir, and that a certain Eua de Cumbe was his Godmother &c. Being asked in what way he knows the age of the heir aforesaid, he says that he is his nearest neighbour, and that it is well known to him. He says also that he has a certain son named John, born on the Festival of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, three years and more before the birth of the aforesaid heir, who was twenty-five years old at the Festival of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist last past.”

“Robert de Burdeuill’, fifty-two years of age and more, living at Hanefeld’ [Henfield], three leagues distant from the aforesaid *ville* of Wistaneston’, being sworn &c. concerning the age, place of birth, baptism, the chaplain who baptized, and the Godfathers and Godmother, agrees with the aforesaid Ralph previously sworn. Being asked in what way he

knows this, he says that he has a certain daughter, Joan by name, born five years before the birth of the aforesaid heir, fifteen days before the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was twenty-six years old, fifteen days before the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary last past &c."

Then follow nine more jurors who give very similar evidence. The twelfth and last,—

"Hugh de Combes, forty years old and more, living at the same place [Combes], two leagues distant from Wistaneston', being sworn &c. concerning the age, place of birth, baptism, the chaplain who baptized, and the Godfathers and Godmother, agrees with the previous witness. Being asked in what way he knows about the age &c., he says that the aforesaid heir was born on Friday next before the Festival of the Annunciation of the Blessed Mary, and was baptized on the Saturday following. He says also that at the same Festival of the Blessed Mary he was living in the retinue of his elder brother John, and continued so for the six years following that Festival; that his brother John aforesaid died, and that after his death the same witness succeeded to his inheritance, and held his lands for fifteen years previous to the Festival of Easter last past &c."

After the evidence given by the twelve jurors the document proceeds to state,— "Whereas the aforesaid Roger has given good proof of his age before our lord the King, that he is of full age, namely twenty-one years and more, therefore let the same Roger have seisin of the lands and tenements appertaining to his inheritance &c. And this record is forwarded to the Chancellor &c." *

* Coram Rege Roll, Mich. 29 Ed. I. m. 26.

From the evidence brought forward here we learn that Roger de Bavent, son and heir of Adam de Bavent, was born at Wistaneston', or Wiston, in Sussex, on Friday 22nd March, 1280, was baptized in the church there on Saturday 30th March, by a chaplain of the name of John, that William Berne-hous and Roger de la Hyde were his Godfathers, and Eva de Cumbe his Godmother, and that he was considered to have attained his majority on Friday 24th March, 1301.

It is worth noticing that the day of the week was regarded more than the day of the month. According to modern computation Roger de Bavent was of age on *Wednesday* 22nd March, but that was not the day which corresponded with the day of his birth, which was the *Friday* next before the Annunciation. The baptism evidently took place on the eighth day after birth, as in early Christian times. The presence of two Godfathers and one Godmother is also noticeable as shewing that *three* sponsors at baptism are an ancient institution, that number being required both by a Constitution of Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1236, and in a Synod at Worcester, four years later.

In the Aid to knight the Black Prince, referred to once or twice before, Roger de Bavent is assessed for a knight's fee and a fifth, or some 768 acres, in Shipbourne, for which he pays 48s. which is more than twice as much as that of any other holder in the Hundred of Wrotham.*

About the year 1362 Hawisia, widow of Sir Roger de Bavent, released to the Prioress and Convent of

* Arch. Cant. x. 149.

Dartford, which had been founded by Edward III. seven years before, all her right in the manor of Shipbourne, and it remained in the possession of the Convent until the General Dissolution in the reign of Henry VIII.

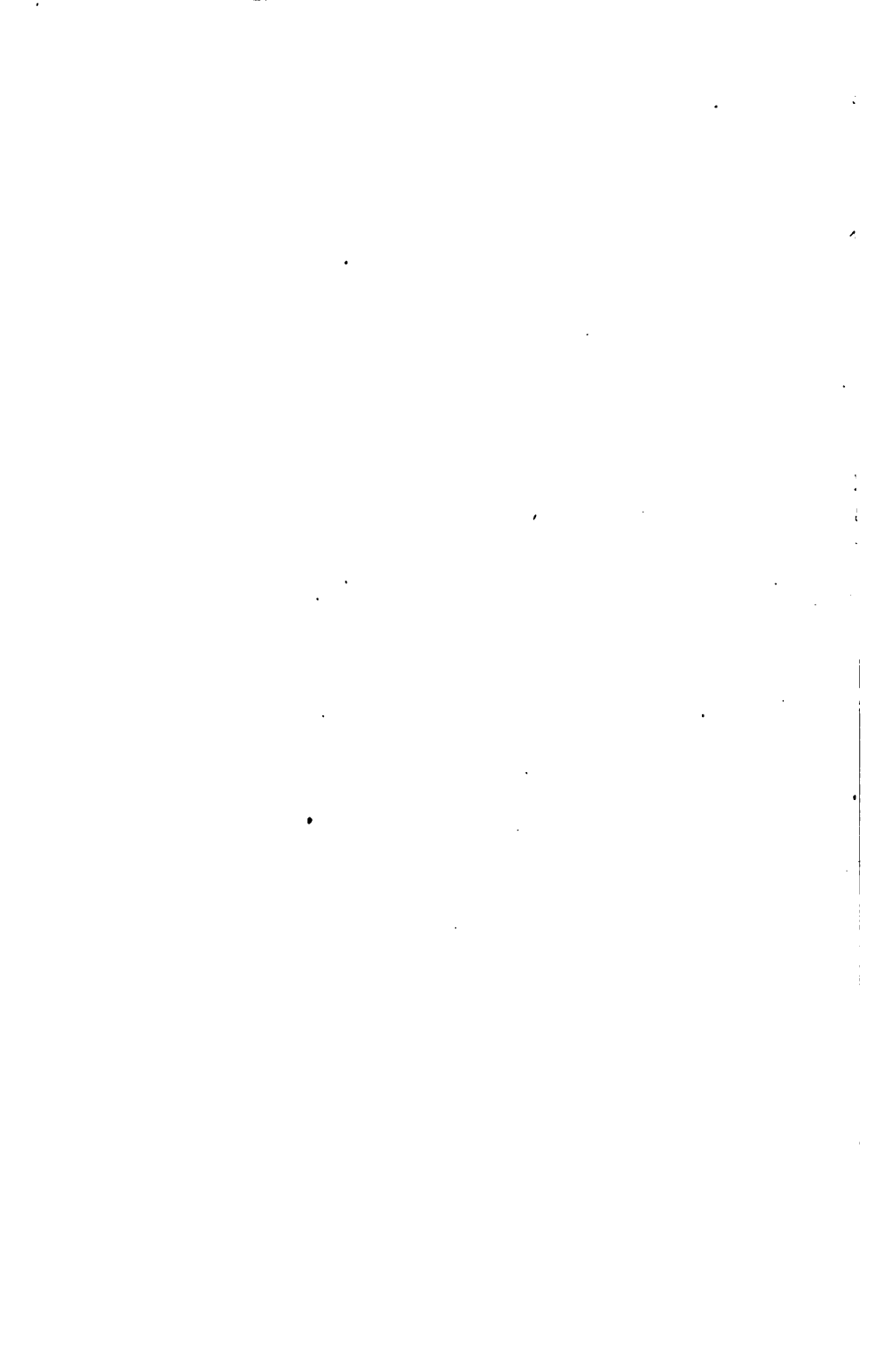
The tenure of land in the Hundred by the Bavents, formed no exception to the rule which seems to have prevailed, of the same family retaining possession only for a few generations. It was so with the Criols, the Inges, and the Soranks. With the Peckhams it was otherwise : they were becoming influential in the district about this period, and for centuries their history goes on side by side with that of the Hundred.

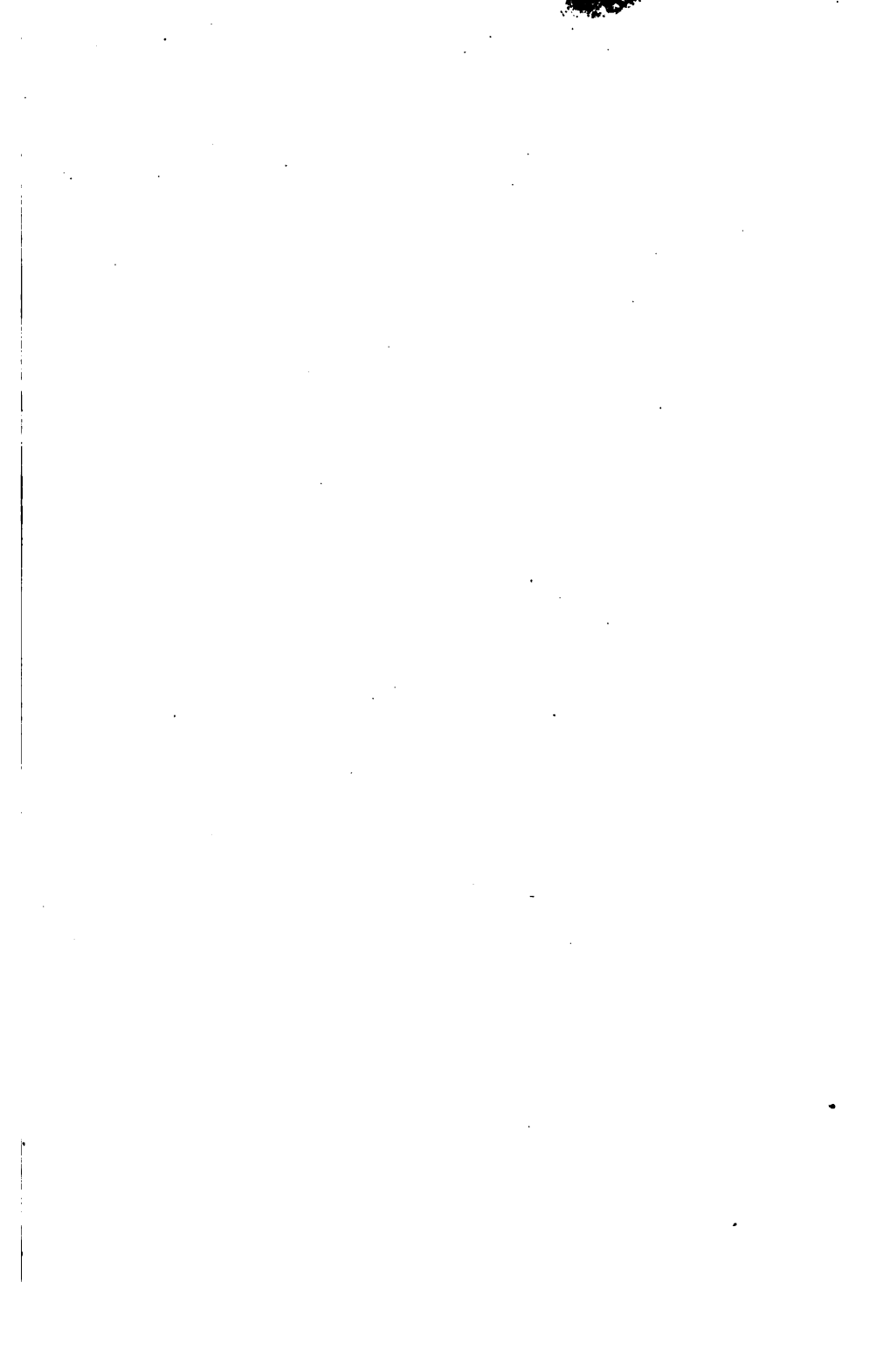
A long account might be written about many of the other families mentioned in the Subsidy Roll ; and some of them might with almost absolute certainty be placed in the exact locality which once knew them so well : but the limits originally assigned to this "Glance" have already been exceeded, and the not uninteresting task of re-peopling the Hundred as it appeared in the half century from 1275 to 1325, must be left to others.

From the top of the hill above Wrotham may be seen, on a clear day, almost every nook and corner of the Hundred, in which the events chronicled in the Assize Rolls took place, and which are now for the first time brought to light. The position is one which will amply repay a visit, for not only is there to be found a most lovely view, but the purest of air. If in addition to these natural treats, the pilgrim to

Wrotham should find the foregoing notes useful in helping his imagination to picture the Hundred somewhat as it would have looked six centuries ago, the labours of the Editor will not have been in vain.







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